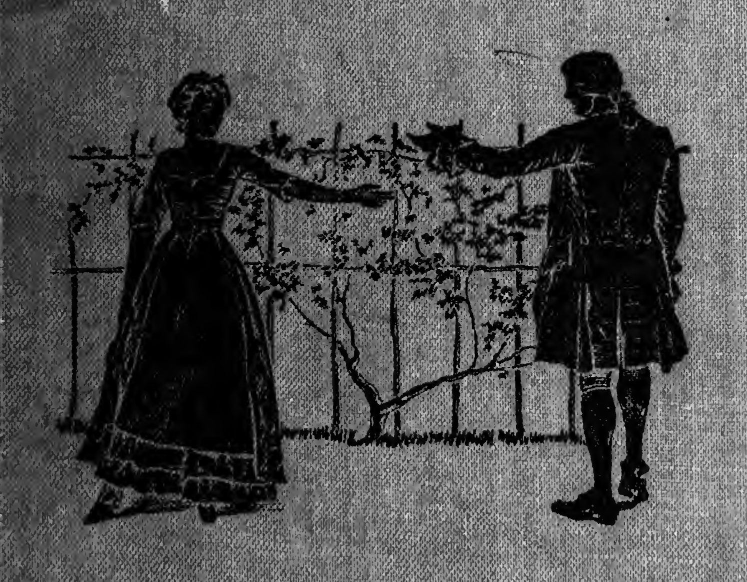
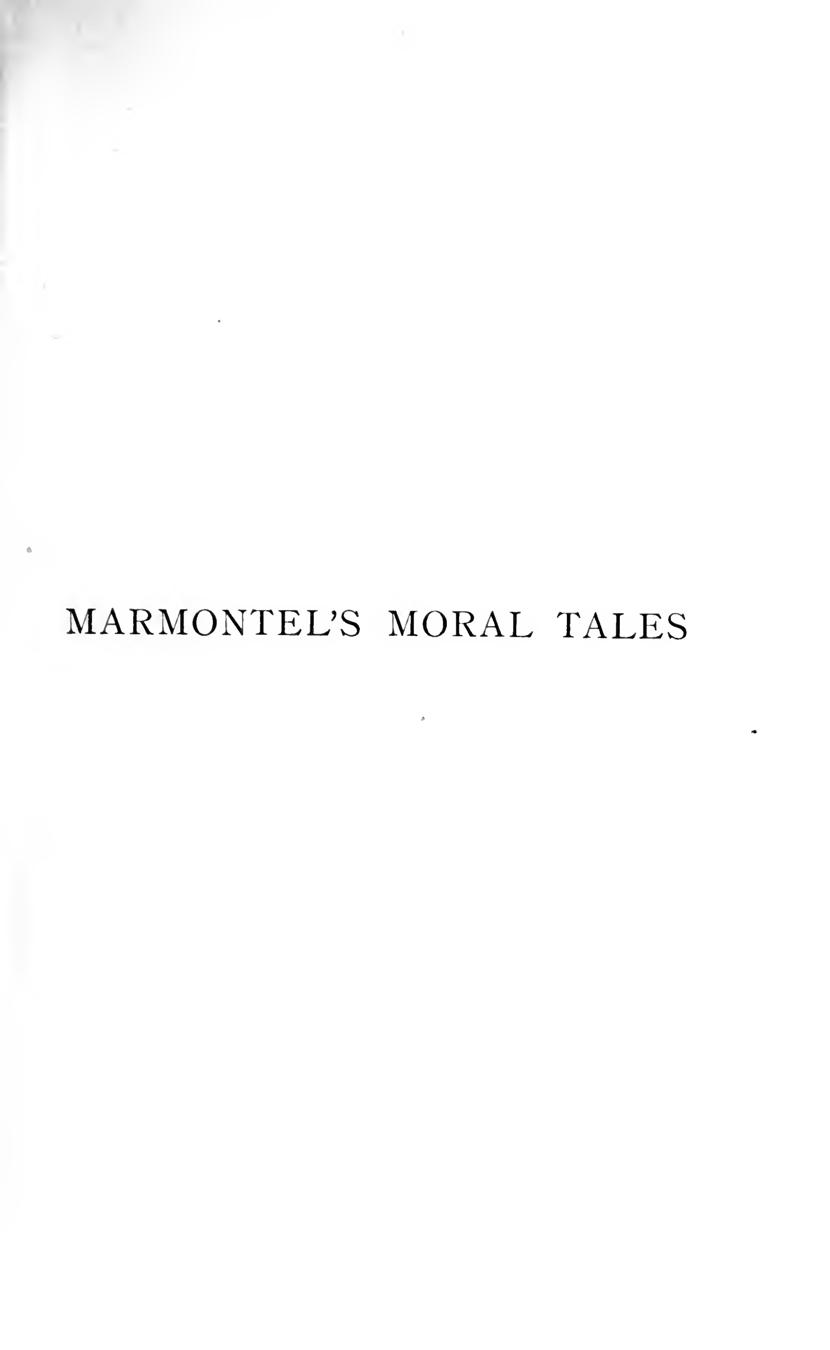
Marmontel's Moral Tales

Edited by
George Saintsbury



With Illustrations by
Chris. Hammond



MARMONTEL'S MORAL TALES


GEORGE ALLEN
PUBLISHER LONDON
RUSKIN HOUSE
156 CHARING CROSS ROAD


Chris Hammond
Mar '95

MARMONTEL'S

MORAL TALES

SELECTED
WITH A REVISED TRANSLATION
BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

GEORGE SAINTSBURY

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
CHRIS. HAMMOND

"The exquisitely finished tales of Marmontel."
RUSKIN

LONDON
GEORGE ALLEN, 156, CHARING CROSS ROAD
1895

Printed by Ballantyne, Hanson & Co.
At the Ballantyne Press

CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

INTRODUCTION

THE enemies of Sainte-Beuve were rather fond of saying that he had a dislike to genius of the highest order, insinuating, if they did not openly add, that this dislike was due to jealousy, and to that sense of creative impotence which is frequently urged against critics. The charge was unjust; and it would probably never have been made if the extreme Hugolaters had not been wroth at a real or supposed defection from their idol. But it would no doubt be possible for an ingenious and not too scrupulous advocate to select and twist texts from Sainte-Beuve in favour of the accusation. One of these, as it happens, opens the Causerie on the author of those *Contes Moraux*, some of which—in their old English dress a little brushed up and set straight—are now once more put before English readers. "Rien ne m'est pénible," wrote the critic rather more than forty years ago, "comme de voir le dédain avec lequel on traite souvent des écrivains recommandables et distingués du second ordre, comme s'il n'y avait place que pour ceux du premier." This indeed is by no means the same thing as intimating a distaste for *ceux du premier;* but it is quite capable of being wrenched or garbled into something like it.

Sainte-Beuve, however, does not proceed to make a very strong fight for Marmontel, and even proposes that posterity shall not be asked to read anything of him but his *Memoirs*, with a *très petit nombre* of his *Tales*. But with Sainte-Beuve, at least in his later days, the biographical interest of literature

got a little the better of the purely literary; and it must be admitted that the biographical interest of Marmontel's *Memoirs* is extraordinarily high. His sketch of his youth, of his good mother and grandmother; of the ravishingly beautiful *curé's* nieces, muleteer's daughters, and so forth, who charmed or soothed his early years; of the angelic Mlle. B., who, when he fell sick for calf-love of her, was brought to his bedside, and though behaving with the most perfect modesty, used language quite different from the unfeeling remarks of Miss Barbara Allen of Scarlet Town in similar circumstances:—all these, though not unpleasant to read, are a little commonplace and usual. His further sketch of his real "loving season,"—when celebrated actresses and mistresses of redoubted marshals competed for him, carried him off into the depths of Champagne, and, reckless at once of propriety and the feelings of their titular adorers, showered upon him the gifts of Bacchus and Venus together—has a little coxcombry and a little mawkishness; while his unvarying distribution of the *beau rôle* to himself (though, to tell the truth, there is no contrary and some confirmatory evidence) becomes at last slightly fatiguing. One remembers Carlyle's irreverent apostrophe to Marmontel's greater contemporary, "*Be* virtuous, in the name of the Devil and his grandmother, and have done with it."

Nevertheless these things make an interesting story, admirably told; and the best part remains to be mentioned. Hardly anything better exists, even in that century of admirable Memoirs, than Marmontel's accounts of the dinners and suppers at the house of Madame Geoffrin, "the nursing-mother of the philosophers." Nothing better of its own kind exists than the gallery of portraits—Madame Geoffrin herself, Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse, the incomparable in her way, d'Alembert, Marivaux, Helvétius, Thomas, Galiani, and many others down to Panard and Gallet—with which he has illustrated these accounts. As he had with a very great deal of intelligence very little ill-nature, Caylus is almost the only person of whom

he speaks with distinct harshness; and as he wrote, though with all his faculties in perfection, long enough afterwards to have his objects defined in "the firm perspective of the past," these portraits are of the greatest value. Indeed, students of some reading will know that whenever anything appears in later literature about any of these personages, Marmontel's account is sure to occupy a prominent place among the sources of information. He knew; he was fairly impartial; and he had an admirable descriptive pen. Of this last one of the best examples is his picture of his own sufferings in the Bastille, where—poor persecuted victim of tyranny!—after despatching a very respectable repast, consisting of haricot *purèe*, a dish of the said haricots, and a famous plate of cod *à la provençale*, with excellent bread and a bottle of decent wine, he discovered that this was intended for his servant, who accordingly came in for the soup, slice of beef, leg of capon, fried artichokes, spinach, pears, grapes, old Burgundy and Mocha coffee, which came a little later, and were intended for the victim himself. For this was the way the prisoners clanked their chains, rustled their straw, and munched their mouldy loaf (as generation after generation of Republican fiction has represented them) in the dungeons of the Bastille.

I cannot, however, say that I myself should base Marmontel's claims by any means so exclusively upon the *Memoirs* as Sainte-Beuve—though it is true he makes a few reserves in the later part of his essay—seems here disposed to do. We shall have something to say to his work in detail presently, and a good deal to say about the *Contes Moraux*. But before coming to these things, or to a sketch of the outward course of his life, it may be well to say a few words about his claims generally.

Marmontel, then, is a very eminent example of the advantages and disadvantages of belonging to a school: the chief of which respectively are that the affiliation "pushes" the scholar during his life, and keeps him back after his death. In the

eighteenth century readers were naturally eager to see what an able, active, and well-reputed exponent of the *philosophe* movement had to say for himself and for it, while the actual battle was going on. That battle is long ago lost and won, in the particular conditions, on the particular field; and looking backwards, posterity is satisfied with considering it only in the actions of its very greatest chiefs and champions. How shall a time, which it must be suspected does not very actively busy itself with, though it still publishes and buys, the works of Voltaire, Rousseau, and Diderot, spare attention for Marmontel?

Yet for the real student, these secondary writers, these generals of corps, or even of division, have, as they had for Sainte-Beuve, a peculiar interest. We see the movement, the drift, the line in them more clearly than in their betters, precisely because it is less mingled with and distorted by any intense personal idiosyncracy. They are not distractingly great nor distracted by their own greatness; they are clear, if limited, comprehensible from beginning to end. The man of genius, being never merely, is never quite of his time: the man of talent is. And Marmontel was a man of very remarkable talent indeed; not a good poet, but an excellent prose writer; a man of great wit, of acute, sometimes almost too acute reasoning faculty, of some imagination, of lore considerable for his time, and rather widely ranging. Nor perhaps is there any better example of that peculiar type of men of letters of whom the eighteenth century was the special nurse—the type to which "society" is an indispensable condition of comfort, and almost of existence. He made a very respectable hermit (with a wife and children) in his latest years, and must have lived a good deal alone in his earliest. But for the best part of half a century he seems to have been hardly ever alone; he even did his Grub Street days in company with a friend and the friend's mistress.

Very good reading as the *Memoirs* are, it would require, as with most Memoirs of the time, considerable pains and skill to

riddle out from them an exact life-history of their author, with dates and facts all in order. Jean François Marmontel was born at Bort, in the Limousin, on July 11, 1723. His family was in humble circumstances (his father, though he does not say so, seems to have been a tailor), and like so many men of letters in France at the time, he owed his education to the Jesuits, whose school at Mauriac he attended. An attempt was made to put him into trade, but he resisted, and succeeded in maintaining himself, in a rather Scotch fashion, during a further course of study at Clermont, by taking pupils. Then his father died, and the condition of the family was less promising than ever. Marmontel transferred himself to Toulouse, where the Jesuits would fain have reaped what they had sown, by attracting him to their order: but this, though he actually wore the ecclesiastical habit for some time without taking vows, did not tempt him, and though still very young, he obtained work as a kind of assistant professor. He competed at the famous Floral Games for poetic prizes, and being defeated, sent his production to Voltaire. It was the constant policy of that astute person to be liberal of praise to young rising men of letters; and Marmontel, receiving a flattering reply, was enrolled for the patriarch's lifetime in the somewhat unsacred band of his disciples and defenders. The Floral Games themselves were at length kind to him, while the Montauban Academy bestowed upon him a silver lyre, which, turned into money, took him to Paris, thereby anticipating the truth of Joubert's dictum, that *la lyre est un instrument ailè*. It could, however, like a limited talisman, do no more: and Marmontel, who had come up with a translation of *The Rape of the Lock* and some other things in his pocket, at first had some acquaintance with the joys of the Parisian Grub Street. Next year, however, he obtained an Academic prize, with a poem on Louis XIV. and his successor, and Voltaire procured for him from the courtiers a literal "hat full of money" for copies of it. He was equally lucky the year after with a

variation of the same subject. It had been Glory before, it was Clemency now. These productions paid much better than the *Observateur Littéraire*, a critical journal which he started almost immediately on his arrival, and which ran for a score or two of numbers. But money was far from plentiful: and part of what he did get was in bills, which he could only turn into cash by taking the value in sugar, and selling it—an odd detail.

The theatre has for nearly three centuries at least been the almost invariable resort of a rising young Frenchman of letters, and it was especially certain to be so in the case of a *protégé* of Voltaire. Marmontel had not been long in Paris when he betook himself to it, helping his success by the orthodox method of making love to leading actresses. This he did to such an extent, that Marshal Saxe, rather a dangerous person to meddle with, complained that the youngster carried off all his favourites. In the five years from 1748 to 1753 he wrote as many tragedies. *Denys le Tyran* the first, and *Aristomène* the second, were great hits: but *Cléopâtre*, *Les Héraclides*, and *Egyptus* were damned—in the first case, it was said, owing to the too ingenious idea of getting the famous mechanic Vaucanson to make an asp that hissed. "I agree with the asp," said somebody, and the fate of the piece was sealed, while the misfortune of another is said to have been due to the chief actress, who had taken more than was good for her. Madame de Pompadour, however, was kinder than the Tragic Muse. From 1753 onwards she obtained for Marmontel divers places: and in 1758 he received the direction of the *Mercure de France*, the official literary journal. It was here that the *Tales* we now republish in an English dress first appeared. But Marmontel, whose course since his early hardships had been one of increasing prosperity, now got into a little trouble. A satire, apparently not his own, on a great man, the Duc d'Aumont, who was rather a frequent butt of the wits, sent him to the Bastille to undergo the very short and

very light imprisonment which he has recorded in his *Memoirs*, and (a more serious matter) caused the *Mercure* to be taken away from him.

A visit to the Bastille was something without which the education of a Frenchman of letters at this time was incomplete. In 1763 Marmontel became an Academician. But the final seal was not put on his reputation till the Sorbonne was good enough to pass censure on *Bélisaire* for its advocacy of toleration. He had long been enrolled among the *philosophes*, and had contributed a great number of articles to the *Encyclopédie;* but a condemnation by the Sorbonne was equivalent to a Grand Cross of the Legion of Philosophic Honour. The Works contain a large assortment of letters to and from distinguished persons on the subject of the book. "Caterine" (so she signs herself) of Russia professes herself enchanted with it; King Stanislaus of Poland indulges in moral ecstasies; the Crown Prince of Sweden plucks all the flowers of rhetoric to adorn the brow of the illustrious condemned. In fact, this extremely dull little book—one of the least good of the numerous imitations of *Télémaque*, and quite unworthy of its author's real talents—may be said to have completed for him the literary fame which the *Contes Moraux* far more deservedly began. From this time forward he was in the first flight of the second rank of Frenchmen of letters: while after the deaths of Voltaire and Rousseau in 1778, and in 1783 of d'Alembert, whom he succeeded as perpetual secretary of the Academy, there could hardly be said to be any one except Diderot who was distinctly his superior, while Diderot himself died in 1784. He had been appointed in 1771 historiographer-royal of France, and in the very year of Voltaire's death he published *Les Incas*, a book of the same class as *Bélisaire*, but better. In 1786 he was made Professor of History in the newly established Lycée, and next year he collected his Encyclopedia articles under the title of *Elémens de Littérature.* He had married in 1778, rather late, after a

not too regular youth: but appears to have been an enthusiastic husband and an affectionate father. His wife was a niece of the Abbé Morellet, and much younger than her husband, but seems to have reciprocated his enthusiasm.

Marmontel, who was one of the youngest of the Encyclopedists, was not a very old man at the outbreak of the Revolution; but like nearly all his contemporaries, he did not relish the whirlwind any the more for having helped to sow the wind. Still, he appears to have behaved very creditably, and there is positive testimony that at an electoral meeting in 1789 itself he had the courage to vote *alone* against headlong reform. He lost most of his appointments, but retiring early from Paris, he was not exposed to any danger, and lived quietly in Normandy, first near Evreux, then near Gaillon. When the Council of Ancients was constituted he was elected to it by his department (the Eure), and was in some danger at the minor revolution of Fructidor. But nothing happened to him, and he died at his Norman home on the very last day of 1799, though not, as Sainte-Beuve, taking the obviously wrong side of a celebrated dispute, says, "on the very eve of the nineteenth century."

Had it been so, the thing would have been appropriate enough: for Marmontel was a very incarnation of the eighteenth century as it developed itself in France, and might fitly have passed with it. It is indeed very difficult to think of any French writer in whom its merits, unobscured by any lack of talent, and its defects, unmasked by any presence of genius, appear so clearly and characteristically. He had, as these Tales will show, abundance of the *esprit* which was more than any single quality its dominating note: and it is perfectly true that, according to a shrewd remark of Villemain's, he "abused this *esprit* so as to make systematic mistakes;" yet this of itself was the eighteenth century all over. The astonishing dicta which meet us side by side with very similar ones in the *Elémens de Littérature;* the grave apology, wholly untinged by

humour, for Homer's presentation of Nausicaa by observing that "it was not yet improper for a princess to wash her father's clothes;" the, as they seem to us, wearisome and cumbrous attempts to read moral, political, and religious lessons into historical fiction in *Bélisaire* and *Les Incas*, must be taken with, not apart from, the lightness and brightness of the demure mischief frequent in the *Contes Moraux*. In the very Tales themselves we shall misunderstand Marmontel and his age if we suppose the counsels to bad mothers to be in the least degree less sincere than the very dubious examples given to bad wives. Even Frenchmen have been more doubtful of the propriety of the title "*Moral* Tales" than was quite necessary. Marmontel was no more an insincere moralist than Pope, whose *Rape of the Lock* he, as has been said, translated, the version beginning with the very characteristic couplet—

D'une jeune Beauté je chante la colère,
Et les graves effets d'une offense légère.

We shall not indeed appreciate Marmontel in the least as he ought to be appreciated, if we do not bear this moral purpose in mind: and in order to do this it is necessary to pay some slight attention to the divisions of his work which may seem most remote from the apparent trifles that form the staple of this book. The seeming ponderous collection of *Leçons d'un Père*, for instance, consisting of discourses on Grammar, Logic, Metaphysics and Morals, is illustrated and lightened by a good-tempered and genial philosophy, which exhibits the best side of the eighteenth-century construction of that word. The *Grammar* may seem not up to modern conceptions of philology and phonetics; the *Logic* (though with the Port Royalists before him, Marmontel could not go very wrong) a little superficial; the *Metaphysics* too much limited to Locke; the *Ethics* too practical and hortatory. But two phrases which I have picked up in quite different parts of his later

work, "Le Beau moral est une source de voluptés," and "Mille vertus sont l'ouvrage de la raison soumise à la nécessité," at once put his attitude and the attitude of the better part of his contemporaries in a nutshell, and supply two very good texts for its vindication. The first distinguishes it as sharply from the point of view of the ages which regard morality from the religious side, as from that of those which either do not feel any special pleasure in moral beauty, or direct their æsthetic hedonism to a large number of other sources of pleasure as well. The second expresses the intensely practical character of the day, and its indifference to transcendental considerations. To those who hold that

Because right is right, to follow right
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence,

the doctrine that virtue is the result of reason adjusting itself to the pressure of circumstance must seem a little mean and paltry. And it is always, of course, open to the adversary to urge that with all its talk about virtue, the eighteenth century, and especially the French eighteenth century, was amazingly tolerant of vice. To which no answer is possible but the old one, that the vices and virtues of most times are perhaps more nearly constant in amount than we think.

The Works are pretty voluminous, though perhaps not extraordinarily so, when it is remembered that Marmontel's literary life extended over nearly sixty years, and that he had no occupation, except literature, that can have taken up much of his time. They fill in the compactest edition about five thousand pages, of perhaps five hundred words each; and there are few kinds of secular writing which are not represented in them. Besides the poems, the plays, the memoirs, the novels, the Encyclopedia articles (the latter a most formidable contingent, giving perhaps a fifth of the whole), and the Tales, there is a long and well-written *Histoire de la Régence du Duc d'Orléans*, the *Leçons d'un Père à ses Enfants*

above referred to, a prose translation of the *Pharsalia*, a certain number of miscellaneous essays and academic discourses, and a few letters. These latter, by the way, are, for a man of Marmontel's time, habits, and society, very rare: and considering the ardour with which rummages into this period have recently been pursued in France, it is odd that more have not appeared.

Nobody need trouble himself much about Marmontel as a poet. The cruel but not unjust description of almost all French and much English verse in his time, that it is "prose cut into lengths," is certainly justified in his case. He had not even the gift of light poetry, which was possessed by many of his contemporaries, though his posthumous attempt in verse, light in more senses than one, *La Neuvaine de Cythère* (which does not figure in his collected works), is perhaps rightly credited with superior elegance to most other things of his. But his verse has the qualities which the age demanded of it—correctness, polish, craftsmanship up to a certain point. It was not for nothing that Marmontel's very first published work was that translation of Pope which has been noticed. The Popian conception of poetry was his sincerely and thoroughly, though it is fair to say that he was never a precisian of the school of Boileau. In his criticism, as we shall see when we come to it, he even blasphemed the "legislator of Parnassus," and was rebuked therefor by Voltaire with good-humoured seriousness; but his practice rather belied his theory. The "Ode on the Battle of Fontenoy" would, if any Englishman cared to take the trouble, give nearly as excellent a subject for burlesque as Boileau's own on the Taking of Namur gave to Prior; those on the Charms of Study and the Selfishness of a False Philosophy, the verse "discourses" on Eloquence, History, and what not, announce by their very titles the sort of thing that they are going to give, and give it. His pen, often admirably light and graceful in the prose of these Tales, moves slowly and heavily in trifling verse. He had a more just value than most

of his contemporaries for the marvellous versification of the *chansonnier* Panard, whom he knew, and from whose wig-box (the poet's storehouse of his verses, as Campbell's slippers were of his money) he used to extract songs for the *Mercure*. But when he tried Panard's rhythms, all grace went out of them. He attempted to write epigrams against Piron, nearly the greatest of all epigrammatists, with disastrous results. As for his tragedies, he added in his old age to those mentioned (*Egyptus*, as damned the first night, was not reprinted) another, *Numitor*, as to which Sainte-Beuve contents himself with scornfully repeating the title. These also are exactly what might be expected. Out of Voltaire and Crébillon the Elder French eighteenth century tragedy permits itself to be read in few cases: and Marmontel's efforts are not among the more engaging minority. He was considerably more successful as a playwright with operas regular and comic (produced in some numbers, and very fair of their kind) to the music of Rameau, Grétry, Piccini, and others. Nor should it be omitted that in the great Glück *v.* Piccini battle he took the side of his collaborator vigorously, and even wrote in defence of Piccini a poem entitled *Polymnie*, which is only partly preserved. But the opera-libretto is not very often readable by posterity with vivid enjoyment.

Of Marmontel as a literary critic, something more special must be said. There is merit even in the early and unsuccessful pages of the *Observateur;* the *Essai sur les Romans* is often good; and so are the academic discourses and other critical miscellanies. But his critical stronghold is the *Elémens de Littérature.* It is, as has been already mentioned, a collection of his articles on the subject in the great *Encyclopédie*, reinforced by some papers on subjects which, in the work presided over by Diderot and d'Alembert, happened to have been assigned to others, and introduced by a really remarkable essay on Taste, where the characteristic oddities above cited are found, side by side with excellent things. Not

many readers of this extensive and curious book, probably, have read it without admiration, despite its peculiarities: but of late years not many have read it at all. I think the perusal would do something to convince impartial judges of some experience that the sneer implied in the description of Marmontel as "universel et médiocre," which has been given by M. Lanson, the latest historian of French literature, is unjust and a little shallow. Marmontel, if not universal, is certainly pretty versatile: but his manner of exhibiting this division of his versatility at least is the reverse of mediocre. Some fashionable follies about things "low," things "barbarous," and so forth, appear: and it is impossible not to be amused at others, such as the grave demonstration by the most elaborate reasons (which amount in effect to nothing but a restatement of the facts) why the English are a poetical people. But no man, not even the most superhuman genius, escapes the note and mark of his own time entirely: and the exceptional thing about Marmontel is that he so often and so constantly does escape that note and mark when it is bad. It is much, very much, for a typical son of the French eighteenth century, even if, as is probable, he is not without indebtedness to certain criticisms of Fénelon, to admit that the great writers of the seventeenth century had *épuré et appauvri* the language of Marot and Montaigne. It is still more for him —fifty years and more before Sainte-Beuve vindicated Ronsard from the almost unintelligible contempt into which that great poet had been thrown by the efforts of Malherbe and Boileau —to dare to produce examples of lyrical grace and grandeur from the despised chief of the Pléiade. But it may be said that this is only the usual revolt of tolerably brisk and intelligent young critics against the dominant teaching of their day. In the first place, Marmontel was not so very young when he originally wrote these things: and was not young at all when he collected and arranged them into a regular literary manual. In the second, the thing was so little usual in his time that

all the industry and ingenuity of those who have occupied themselves in seeking out "Romantics before Romanticism" would be puzzled to find another example of Marmontel's eminence in Marmontel's day.

And the book has much more merit than this of mere revolt or resipiscence. For all its alphabetic and academic form (relieved, it should be said, by a good many capital anecdotes), for all the old-fashioned air which the separate handling of "The Amusing," "The Pathetic," "Harangues," "Situation," "Exordiums," "Poetical Invention," and so forth may throw over it—the clearness and definition which this scheme imparts, though they may be now and then pushed too far, give the book many advantages over the discursive æsthetics of later times. And quite independently of its form, there are two things which must strike every competent reader, and which between them are the touchstone of competent critical writing. In the first place, Marmontel *knows:* and there are so many critics who speak without knowing! Here also, no doubt, he has limitations. He knew little or nothing of mediæval literature: and to this day the critics of his country (perhaps of all countries) do not know very much of it. He was not very widely read in foreign literature; and was it not only the other day that no less a critic than M. Jules Lemaître professed himself, without much or any shame, unable to read Shakespeare in the original? Marmontel could read Shakespeare in the original: he had, as we have seen, translated Pope very early: and he probably knew more of English literature, at least as it was then known to Englishmen themselves, than all but a very few Frenchmen of his day. If *Ossian* took him in, it took in all Europe (as to attraction, that is to say, not authenticity), and most good critics now agree that, with all the doctoring and adulteration, there is the real "Celtic vague" in Macpherson's queer jumble of reminiscence and forgery and simple imitation. The European literary languages, among which German then

hardly counted, he knew well, while he seems to have known something even of German; and he was really familiar with his classics. Even of Greek he was certainly not ignorant, while I fancy that his familiarity with Latin literature would have enabled him to put to confusion the average modern philological scholar. And he used all this knowledge to supply his book with a mass of illustrative quotation, which for absence of mere parade, and for genuine illumination and point, leaves that of even the best literary manuals, as a rule, very far behind.

Yet even this would not put Marmontel nearly so high as he at present deserves to stand, were his knowledge not accompanied by a shrewdness and justness of thought and expression which rarely fail, unless they are mastered by some conventional delusion, and which not unfrequently enable him to get the better of that. Even in the *Essai sur le goût* (and there is no truer commonplace than that the mere taste of one time is almost certain to be in part at least distasteful to any other), this acute and active mind, this ready and exact language, will extort admiration from any fair judge. And it would be possible to extract from Marmontel a body of general literary axioms and aphorisms which would be very surprising if they were the work of a mediocre person: and which, as Sainte-Beuve says, with a point of irony pleasantly restrained to a single word, "la jeunesse non orgueilleuse" among critics of all times, and not least of this time, may read with a great deal of advantage. It is true that there is not much paradox in him, and there are some people who seem to think that without a "pair o' dowgs," as the Ettrick Shepherd calls it, it is impossible that criticism can deserve applause or escape contempt. The doctrine is at least a comfortable one, for paradox requires no knowledge, no particular shrewdness of thought, and absolutely no justness in it. So that this kind of *jeunesse orgueilleuse* (or *vieillesse frivole*, as the case may be) will be quite right in despising Marmontel, whose grapes are sour to it.

Bélisaire and *Les Incas* concern us here chiefly in that they approach the kind if not the style of the *Contes Moraux* themselves. Contemporaries, indeed (it cannot be said that posterity has troubled itself much about them, save for a time as school-books), were somewhat divided as to the name by which they ought to be called. Some regarded them as novels with a *philosophe* purpose for aim, and a sort of historical basis for starting-point—which is indeed the most philosophical way of looking at them. Others considered them as history with a few fanciful developments, and this to a certain extent they are: for Marmontel lacked neither knowledge, nor intelligence, nor industry. He only lacked, as most of his contemporaries did till Gibbon taught them, the historic sense—that intangible, indefinable, but still unmistakable and indispensable quality which, for instance, will tell a man not to put the sentiments of Marcus Aurelius, still less those of Cicero, in the mouths of the contemporaries of Justinian. Yet a third class bestowed upon both the generally unlucky appellation of "prose poem." This in point of style they deserve well enough, abounding as they do in rhetorical and quasi-lyrical bursts and apostrophes, which in *Les Incas* take the form of regular choruses. This bastard style has always had a considerable attraction for the French, and however great the influence of Fénelon and others was on Marmontel, he pretty certainly passed it on to others again, especially to Chateaubriand, whose *Martyrs* is the masterpiece of the kind. It is, however, always a *rococo* and second-rate kind, neither one thing nor the other, and constantly making the reader wish that the author would make up his mind whether he is going to write poetry or prose in manner, fiction, history, or doctrine in matter. The really considerable narrative gifts which, as the present book will show, Marmontel possessed, have very little chance of appearing in this style: though it must be confessed that the mania for a kind of preaching which inspires these two once famous books is hardly less

apparent in the Tales themselves, and justifies the application to them of the epithet Moral.

Enough, I think, and not too much, I hope, has now been said about Marmontel generally: and we may come to the *Contes Moraux* themselves. Their publication, which extended in all over more than thirty years, though none of the latest are included in this collection, began in the *Mercure*, but not under Marmontel's own editorship. Before he himself received the patent—a term, however, rather inadequate to express the French *privilége*, inasmuch as the latter was revocable at pleasure, and expired with the death of the holder—he had induced Madame de Pompadour to give it to an indigent man of letters named Boissy, at whose death only he himself received it, giving up his former place of Secretary of Public Buildings. Boissy was not much skilled in the management of periodicals: and Marmontel, after getting him the place, helped him with various contributions, of which these *Contes Moraux* were the chief. They were extremely popular at the time; and their popularity was helped by their subsequent appearance in volume-form with plates by Moreau *le jeune*. This popularity spread to other countries with great rapidity, and they were soon translated into most European languages. But what is rather curious, though perhaps not entirely unexampled, is that the external popularity distinctly outdid and outlasted the home vogue. Perhaps the inclusion of the *Contes* in the general editions of Marmontel's works, accounts for their not having been very frequently reprinted by themselves after the date (1786) of the first of these collections. But this would hardly account for the scant favour with which, even in the marked revival of interest in eighteenth century work during the last thirty years in France, they seem to have received. While not a few collections of eighteenth century tales have been (in some cases more than once or twice) reissued in modern garb, I cannot remember, during a long course of years in which I have had occasion to know of most

new books in France, any reprint of them: while my booksellers declare themselves equally ignorant. And critical tone about them has been, if not exactly harsh, by no means very favourable.

In England, on the other hand, the vogue of the *Tales* was pretty early, and was long enduring. The British Museum catalogue contains fully half-a-dozen entries of translations; the title, as everybody knows, was adopted by Miss Edgeworth; the book was read by everybody, and traces of it (such as "the beautiful Cephalis" of Peacock) appear in places where only cunning literary trackers are likely to spy them. The fact is that the whole tone of the book was even better adapted to England than to France. That Marmontel had the orthodox *philosophe* respect for England (though he could not avoid falling into the pit which yawns for almost all his countrymen by bestowing upon two of his English heroes the names of Sir Harry *Adelton* and Lord Alfred *Orombel*, while he transliterated "Maclaurin" into the fearful and wonderful form "Mackhlorin") may have had something, but cannot have had very much, to do with the matter. He had more genuine appeals. His morality, which may have seemed occasionally excessive to Frenchmen, was sure to recommend him on this side the Channel: his license, which may not have been great enough to give him bite and relish there, was not sufficient to scandalise *le cant Britannique* at a time when it was still by no means very squeamish. And he hit or set the mood which is so prominent in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, and of which Miss Edgeworth herself is the chief exponent in English *belles lettres*, a mood which made up its ideal of human life out of a curious blend of sceptical curiosity, human kindness, especially in the matter of the family affections, enjoyment of society, admiration of liberty, progress, and what not, a sort of rather vague and undogmatic religion, and a great adoration of "virtue." Except that *Sandford and Merton* is more definitely directed to childish things, the spirit of

Sandford and Merton is very close indeed to that of Marmontel. And indeed this versatile and accomplished writer was very well fitted to put into popular form the floating ideas and notions of men rather greater than himself, and so to attract and captivate the attention of men rather less. He had not *plus que personne*, but more than most people *l'esprit que tout le monde a*.

To the English reader of the *Tales* to-day, on the other hand, a certain amount of preparation and accommodation may be necessary before they can be really enjoyed. For they are in some ways capital examples of an entire scheme of thought, sentiment, and phrase, which has long been foreign to the phrase, the sentiment, the thought of Englishmen—which has indeed for something like two generations been rather distinctly the butt of Englishmen's ridicule. Even in France the extraordinary tearfulness of the "sensibility" age—"sensible" and "sensibilité" in the sense which the title of Miss Austen's novel almost alone preserves for the ordinary reader occur on every page—has for a considerable number of years seemed excessive: to Englishmen, it must still seem unmanly if not unintelligible. The cult of *ma mère* is still active across the Channel, where it is certainly not the worst of the prevalent cults: but even in France, few writers, I think, would to-day present, or for a considerable number of years would have presented, as Marmontel does, the hero of "The Bad Mother" running about the deck by turns exclaiming on his parent and disembowelling pirates. To Englishmen, here, again, the thing must seem not merely excessive, but positively ludicrous, at first sight. Yet all these things, all these fashions of sentiment and expression, are far more purely external than men are often willing to admit: they are after all the clothes, not the body, of thought and feeling: and an unfamiliar fashion of clothes, though nothing is more absurd at first sight, soon becomes familiar enough.

That it may become so, however, it may not be superfluous

to make a sort of rough and general sketch—a kind of fashion-book—of the country in which the modern English reader will here find himself. Some of its features have been referred or alluded to already: but they may be put together here.

To the moral or emotional characteristics of the region, besides the habit of bursting into tears and that of invoking *ma mère*, must be added a very amiable confidence in the perfectibility of human nature. Even Marmontel's villains are very generally open to conversion; his middle characters are invariably so; and his good ones are angels according to this particular scheme of the angelic. Not much more need be said than has been said about the technical "morality" of this scheme, except that it involves some approach to toleration of women's faults by men, as well as a very ample indulgence in the other direction. Nothing more characteristic of the difference in the point of view can be even imagined than the very slight effect produced upon the virtuous, and it would seem affectionate Acelia, in "A Wife of Ten Thousand," by her husband's confession of his costly infidelity with Eleonora. Even La Fontaine's ultra-philosophy of

Quand on le sait c'est peu de chose

hardly expresses the calmness with which Acelia condones the infidelity: and though she is seriously disturbed at the extravagance, her first thought is to visit "the other person," to treat her with much politeness, if with some frankness, and to stoop to chaffer in a fashion which to another stamp of honest woman would be not so much hard as impossible. But this apparent topsy-turvyness will last no longer than the time necessary for the reader to appreciate the singular contrast of the most solid sense co-existing with the most fantastic sensibility in this eighteenth century; and also the profound good nature which was one of its best features. For all what we are pleased to call its brutality, all its fondness for practical jokes, all the horrors of its prisons and its ships, its workhouses and its

madhouses, all the vagueness and want of organisation of its philanthropy, it was probably the most good-natured century in modern history.

As for other "customs of the country," the reader will find himself fully plunged into that very peculiar pseudo-classicalism —literary, historical, and miscellaneous—which prevailed long and widely over Europe, but attained full perfection only in France and only in the French eighteenth century. A "classic" in the cant literary sense Marmontel was not quite. He scandalised others besides Voltaire by speaking disrespectfully of Boileau; and what has been said above of his literary criticism generally will show that he had half-unconscious tendencies to the wholly unknown creed of Romanticism. But in externals his literary work simply reeks of that queer combination of toga and helmet with patch and powder which characterised his time. The odd macaronic nomenclature, half Greek, half nondescript; the occasional plunges into actual classical scenes; the maintenance of a sort of not too clearly understood Ciceronian standard of ethical propriety and philosophical orthodoxy—all this, mixed up as it is with direct and lively details of the day, gives a character to the general scenery and surroundings which is unmistakable, and (when once it has begun to be relished), not a little agreeable.

Hardest of all, perhaps, though habituation to it is to a great extent implied in getting accustomed to the other peculiarities just mentioned, is the language of the Tales. The French eighteenth century, as all students of it know, had two ways of speaking and writing, which, accurately and separately described, may seem the most "incompossible," as Sir William Hamilton used to say, of all literary manners. The one was a style of declamation at once dry and pompous, loaded with emphatic adjectives, and yet strangely destitute of colour or majesty, full of convention, too often bombastic when it tried to be forcible, and too often flat and tame when it discarded that endeavour. The other was a style of easy, and more or less

satiric narrative or conversation, which, if it sometimes sinned by a little too elaborate archness, was at its best the lightest, airiest, most attractive vehicle for badinage and bagatelle that is known or that is even conceivable, unless it be that lighter conversational style of Greek of which we have some glimpses in Plato and Aristophanes, and a fuller but late and mixed adumbration in Lucian. These two styles are rarely found quite apart, though Thomas, Marmontel's friend and contemporary, was an almost pure representative of the heavy and artificial style. Both are mixed in Marmontel himself, though, to do him justice, he seldom sins by the very worst kind of what the French call the "emphatic" style. But as Sainte-Beuve has partly confessed, one is constantly startled in him by the odd lapses of taste and judgment in this respect—constantly surprised to find a man not merely of wit but of positive humour, not merely of critical accomplishment but of critical taste, making false notes and discords, alternating a shrewd observation with an empty platitude, and a real *bon mot* with a sentence of fustian. But to this, too, we get accustomed, and without by any means losing sense of the weaknesses (which would be a pity) we can devote ourselves chiefly to the strong parts, which are numerous.

The Tales here translated all belong to the first or original collection of the *Contes Moraux*, which alone are included in the old translation, here presented in a revised form. A few Tales are here omitted. "Alcibiade ou le Moi" was the first of the set, and very popular in its time: but is a rather commonplace satire on the selfishness of women, or rather the difficulty of being "loved for oneself." "Les Quatres Flacons" and "Heureusement" (the latter the object of Sainte-Beuve's preference) deserve something of the same description. In "Les Deux Infortunées," *sensibilité*, according to the favourite French jingle, becomes *sensiblerie*. "L'Heureux Divorce" is a rather amusing anticipation of the stories of *amantium iræ*, which have become so common in France since the

re-establishment of the institution referred to, and might have been given here if space had allowed. "Annette et Lubin" is a true tale, with a touch of *grivoiserie*. This and the others are excluded because some of them might have required "editing" to suit English tastes, though none can be said to exceed a very moderate degree of license according to French standards.

It must, however, be said that this earliest and principal collection of *Contes Moraux* does not include all the stories of the kind that Marmontel produced. On the contrary, he frequently returned to the style during his later years, and the *Nouveaux Contes Moraux* fill rather more space than their forerunners. They are, however, distinguished from them in more ways than one: and not as a rule to their advantage, though some have a considerable interest. The earlier tales differ somewhat, but not very greatly in length, and on an average do not fill more than fifteen pages of the compact French edition above referred to. The first of the *Nouveaux Contes* (it is true that it is a sort of nest of tales one within the other) fills more than seventy: and two others nearly as much between them. In these later stories, too, Marmontel, who in the earlier had introduced none but fictitious personages (or if, as was probably the case, he sometimes brought in real ones, had clothed them with fictitious names), draws on his memory and introduces Voltaire, D'Alembert, Vauvenargues and others, *in propriâ personâ*. The moralising object too becomes more prominent than ever, and the crisp and direct character of the stories is somewhat lost. Nevertheless, to mention only two, "Le Trépied d'Helène" (in which a tripod fished out of the sea and ordered by Apollo to be given to "the wisest" is successively offered to each of the Seven Sages of Greece and declined by them, each confessing himself to have some remarkable lack of wisdom) is a lively and well-kept-up specimen of the classical tale with a purpose; and "La Cassette" (which by the way shows the widespread influence of these Tales in the fact that it supplied Miss

Edgeworth with the most important incident in the *dénouement* of *Belinda* or at least of the Delacour part of it) could rank very well with all but the best of the Tales here presented.

Still it is by these Tales that Marmontel must be judged; and the batch is, I think, sufficiently varied as well as sufficiently interesting to justify him. Which is the best may be an idle but is an almost universal and unavoidable question. There are certainly few better than the very first, which with its celebration of the *nez à la Roxelane* supplies a pleasantly impertinent complement and contrast to Pascal's remark about the length of Cleopatra's. Marmontel has certainly done nothing, nor has Voltaire himself done much, with a surer and lighter hand than the rapid and almost bewildering capitulation of the Sultan to this audacious little baggage, who does not even assume the virtues if she has them not, who is apparently superior to fear and jealousy, the most overmastering of passions, who is afraid of nothing except the absence of "men and her own way," and who sums up the whole situation unanswerably in the equation, "Vous êtes puissant; je suis jolie; nous voilà donc de pair."

"The Scruple" is perhaps a little less masterly, less universal; but it is very French and very eighteenth century. "Lausus and Lydia" also deserves these epithets, but perhaps in a rather less complimentary sense. The habit of composing a sort of golden age of heroic virtues (with a few heroic vices, it is true) out of the scenes and characters of classical literature has long been unfamiliar to us, and it seems to us no doubt just as absurd (it cannot possibly seem more) as numerous literary habits of our own would have seemed to our great-great-grandfathers and will seem to our great-great-grandsons. Perhaps also in this style, which Fénelon made popular, the later "Samnite Marriages" is a better example. But "All or Nothing" is a very sprightly handling of the eternal contrast of the two lovers; and "The Pretended Philosopher" is

capital. "Philosopher" indeed is, as has been frequently pointed out, by no means a very happy or exact version of "Philosophe," but that cannot be helped, and the piquancy of the tale is by no means diminished by the fact that Marmontel himself was at once an unquestioned member (even of high degree) in the *philosophe* brotherhood, and a sort of outsider to it in certain respects. For all the shock that the Sorbonne was so kind as to experience from *Bélisaire* and *Les Incas*, his enthusiasm for the rationalist and freethinking campaign was of a strictly limited kind. It certainly stopped altogether short of the militant atheism of the Holbachian coterie; and it may be doubtful whether, except in the ardour of the novitiate, it reached Voltaire's dislike of positive creeds. The resemblance between Marmontel and Béranger was not likely to escape so acute a critic as Sainte-Beuve, and in fact nothing can better describe the attitude of the author of the *Contes Moraux* than the comfortable summing up, "Baise-moi, Suzon; et ne damnons personne." He was therefore perfectly free to satirise some little peculiarities in his good friends, and to do him justice he makes some good fun here of a few of his own. On the whole, however, it is Rousseau who is hit harder than anybody else in this tale.

The two "Mothers" approach the average merit of the tales as near as any: if anything, they fall a little below it; but "The Shepherdess of the Alps" stands considerably higher. It has of course all the defects of Sensibility; its intense unpracticalness—the very thing that commended it to an eminently practical age—its high-flown and high-strung sentiment, and all the rest. But it also has something genuinely "touching," to use the word which Marmontel loves, and which is often so hard to render in English—and it has in an eminent degree that semi-operatic illusion, that rose-pink and sky-blue scheme of colour, which, decry it as common-sense or cynicism may, has an odd and enduring charm for *les âmes bien nées* in all ages. In "The Good Husband" and

"The School for Fathers" the reforming morality of the time and its rather amiable belief in perfectibility by moral influence are fairly well illustrated, and "The Connoisseur" is one of the very best of the whole. Few portraits of the eighteenth century *espiègle*—the damsel with *minois chiffonné* who has come down to us as far as her physical charms go, better in the incomparable pastels of La Tour than even in Greuze—are more charming than that of Agatha. And even the most ambitious of women ought to be obliged to Marmontel for her clear conception of the fact that her uncle's not too honourable stratagem must anyhow turn to her and her lover's advantage, compared with the mixture of wounded vanity and lack of foresight which distinguishes her lover.

The apparently preposterous *donnée* of "The Sylph Husband"—though really the decade which has seen certain things both in London and Paris, had better bethink itself a little before it dismisses Paracelsism as preposterous—ought not to hide the ingenuity of its conduct and the malicious fun of the final situation; so that this also belongs to the class of tales where the ephemeral element does not exclude the universal and permanent. Perhaps not quite so much can be said of "Lauretta," which, if moral enough after a certain fashion, may give occasion to carpers to urge that if the heroine had been a little less captivated with mere splendour and a little less ready to inflict torture on a lover of whom she had very little to complain, it would have been better. The same unpleasant person may say that Melidor in "A Wife of Ten Thousand" is such a very feeble creature that his reformation could have offered few difficulties and presents as few points of interest; while, as has indeed been pointed out in a previous passage, Acelia's extremely business-like composition with her husband's mistress is not wholly pleasing. But this is only another of the innumerable difficulties of reconciling the mere taste of one time and that of another. "Friendship put to the Test" at least ought to find favour in England, if only

for the first sentence, which is amusing to contrast with the appreciation by Gibbon and others of the English University system, nor should "The Misanthrope Corrected" suffer from the danger of continuations — of which, by the way, the eighteenth century tried several to Molière's famous creation, even going so far as to make the attempt in drama itself. Marmontel was wiser, and the subject gave him such scope for the treatment he preferred in these moral tales that it may rank with the very best of them.

It is a good finale; and it is not for nothing that the French and English editions, which for this reason or that do not always coincide in the order of the Tales, both put it in that position. For Marmontel's idea of life—which if not the best is also very far from the worst—pretty well sums itself up in that of a "Misanthrope Corrected" by experience. He had never himself been misanthropical, or as we say now, pessimist; his easy and unforced enjoyment of the good things of life, joined perhaps to a certain absence, already more than once referred to, of a too fastidious niceness, saved him from that defect, if it at the same time shut him out from certain transcendental excellences and sufferings. It was "human nature's daily food" that he hungered after; and it is not unsatisfactory to know that he seems to have had a very fair share of it. In his scheme there may be a little too much of the fairy tale, and not of the most elevated kind of fairy tale; but wheresoever there is a fairy tale of any kind there is the *unum necessarium* of literature and of life. Not to sulk, not to give yourself airs, not be content with or be discontented without the superfluous and exceptional, to do no ill to others and some good to yourself—these were his somewhat pagan but very decided merits.

I am afraid that he must underlie the curse (which I understand is a grave and frequent one on the lips of some of our wits of the present day) of having succumbed to and acquiesced in "the obvious." It is a serious condition. Yet,

after all, perhaps this like other things is a misfortune susceptible of distinction. The fool of one kind takes the obvious because it gives him least trouble to do so; the fool of another rejects the obvious because that is the most obvious way, to him, of acquiring renown. To the wise man the *obvia*, as part of the *omnia*, themselves also *exeunt in mysterium*, and if he goes far enough are not the least preferable road to it.

POSTSCRIPT.

Something must be said of the text which follows. As has been observed, the whole body of the Tales is not given, but no omissions have been made in those which appear; for I have a very strong objection to mutilating classics. The base and substance of the translation is the old booksellers' version, which, as has been noted above, had so wide a vogue among our grandfathers and great-grandfathers a hundred years ago. It was necessary, however, to revise it rather freely, for though a contemporary translation, especially in the case of a state of feeling and language so artificial as that of the late eighteenth century in France and England, has advantages which another age cannot hope to equal, the "eminent hand" here employed is not beyond reproach. Occasionally it made very strange blunders which can only have come from carelessness if they did not come from ignorance. It is for instance going a little too far to turn rendre les hommes solidaires *into "rendering man a* solitary *animal."* On, *that constant stumbling-block of translators from French into English, proves fatal again and again: the treacherous words which possess doubles that are no equivalents, like* prétendre, ménager, *and so forth, receive their victim time after time; the French order, despite its clumsiness in English, is habitually retained, and worst of all there are occasional*

omissions of whole clauses or even sentences. Possibly it was an Irish hand: "hatching the buds of genius" is worthy of Sir Boyle himself. I have endeavoured to mend these things without complete rewriting, and while some may think that I ought to have done more I do not think any one will accuse me of having done too much, though some might if they had seen the altered text. I am most afraid of having omitted some of the omissions, the most difficult point of all to safeguard when a textus receptus *of any kind is used. I have as a rule smoothed out the present tense, which, mixed with the past in narrative, is almost always disgusting in English; and whereas my predecessor courageously kept "sensible" and "respectable"—adjectives which in modern English are the one usually unintelligible, the other almost always ridiculous—I have more commonly replaced them by others, though by no means always by the same. A few notes have been added, but to distinguish them from those of the old translation, which have been retained at the foot of the page, they have been set at the end of each tale.*

GEORGE SAINTSBURY.



Soliman II

IT is pleasant to see grave historians racking their brains, in order to find out great causes for great events. Sylla's valet-de-chambre would perhaps have laughed heartily to hear politicians reasoning on the abdication of his master; but it is not of Sylla that I am now going to speak.

Soliman II. married his slave, in contempt of the laws of the sultans. One at once imagines this slave as an accomplished beauty, with a lofty soul, an uncommon genius, and a profound skill in politics. No such thing; the fact was as follows:—

Soliman in the midst of his glory suffered from ennui; the various, but facile pleasures of the seraglio had become insipid to him. "I am weary," said he one day, "of receiving here the caresses of mere machines. These slaves move my pity. Their soft docility has nothing piquant, nothing flattering.

It is to hearts nourished in the bosom of liberty, that it would be delightful to make slavery agreeable."

The whimsies of a sultan are laws to his ministers. Large sums were instantly promised to such as should bring European slaves to the seraglio. In a short time there arrived three, who, like the three Graces, seemed to have divided among themselves all the charms of beauty.

Features noble and modest, eyes tender and languishing, an ingenuous temper and a sensitive soul, distinguished the touching Elmira. Her entrance into the seraglio, and the idea of servitude, had frozen her with a mortal terror. Soliman found her in a swoon in the arms of his women. He approached; he recalled her to life; he encouraged her; she raised towards him a pair of large blue eyes bedewed with tears; he reached forth his hand to her; he supported her himself; she followed him with a tottering step. The slaves retired; and as soon as he was alone with her, "It is not with fear, beautiful Elmira," said he to her, "that I would inspire you. Forget that you have a master; see in me only a lover."—"The name of lover," said she to him, "is not less unknown to me than that of master, and both the one and the other make me tremble. They have told me—and I still shudder at the thought—that I am destined to your pleasures. Alas! what pleasure can it be to tyrannise over weakness and innocence? Believe me, I am not capable of the compliances of servitude; and the only pleasure possible for you to taste with me is that of being generous. Restore me to my parents and my country, and by respecting my virtue, my youth, and my misfortunes, merit my gratitude, my esteem, and my regret."

This discourse from a slave was new to Soliman; his great soul was moved by it. "No," said he, "my dear child, I will owe nothing to violence. You charm me. I would make it my happiness to love and please you; but I prefer the torment of never seeing you more to that of seeing you unhappy

However, before I restore you to liberty, give me leave to try, at least, whether it be not possible for me to dissipate that terror which the name of slave strikes into you. I ask only one month's trial, after which, if my love cannot move you, I will avenge myself no otherwise on your ingratitude than by delivering you up to the inconstancy and perfidy of mankind."—"Ah! my lord!" cried Elmira, with an emotion mixed with joy, "how unjust are the prejudices of my country, and how little are your virtues known there! Continue such as I now see you, and I shall no longer count this day unfortunate."

Some moments after, she saw slaves enter, carrying baskets filled with stuffs and precious jewels. "Choose," said the sultan to her: "these are clothes, not ornaments, that are here presented to you; nothing can adorn you."—"Decide for me," said Elmira to him, running her eyes over the baskets. "Do not consult me," replied the sultan: "I hate everything, without distinction, that can hide your charms from me." Elmira blushed; and the sultan perceived she preferred the colours most favourable to the character of her beauty. He conceived an agreeable hope from that circumstance; for care to adorn one's self is almost a desire to please.

The month of trial passed away in timid gallantries on the part of the sultan, and on Elmira's side, in complaisance and delicate attentions. Her confidence in him increased every day, without her perceiving it. At first, he was not permitted to see her but after her toilette was completed, and before she began to undress; in a short time he was admitted both to her toilette and dishabille. It was then that the plan of their amusements for that day and the next was formed. Whatever either proposed was exactly what the other was going to propose. Their disputes turned only on the plagiarism of their thoughts. Elmira, in these disputes, perceived not some small carelessnesses, which escaped her

modesty. A dressing-gown in disorder, or a garter put on unthinkingly, indulged the sultan in pleasures which he was cautious not to testify. He knew (and it was much for a sultan to know) that it was impolitic to advertise modesty of the dangers to which it exposes itself; that it is never less kind than when alarmed; and that in order to subdue it, one should render it familiar. Nevertheless, the more he discovered of Elmira's charms, the more he felt his fears increase, on account of the approach of the day that might deprive him of them.

The fatal period arrived. Soliman caused chests to be prepared, filled with stuffs, precious stones, and perfumes. He repaired to Elmira, followed by these presents. "To-morrow," said he, "I promised to restore you to liberty, if you still regret the want of it. I now come to acquit myself of my promise, and to bid you adieu for ever."—"What!" said Elmira, trembling. "To-morrow? I had forgot it."—"It is to-morrow," went on the sultan, "that, delivered up to my despair, I am to become the most unhappy of men."—"Then you are very cruel to yourself to put me in mind of it!"—"Alas! it depends only on you, Elmira, that I should forget it for ever."—"I confess," said she to him, "that your sorrow touches me; that your behaviour has interested me in your happiness; and that if, to show my gratitude, it were necessary only to prolong the time of my slavery . . ."—"No, Madam. I am but too much accustomed to the happiness of possessing you; I perceive that the more I know of you, the more terrible it would be to me to lose you: this sacrifice will cost me my life; but I shall only render it the more grievous by deferring it. May your country prove worthy of it! May those mortals whom you bless deserve you better than I do! I ask but one favour of you, which is, that you would be pleased cordially to accept these presents as the feeble pledges of a love, the purest and tenderest that yourself, yes, that you yourself are capable of inspiring."—"No," replied she, with an almost smothered

voice, "I will not accept of your presents. I go: you will have it so! But I will carry away from you nothing but your image." Soliman, lifting up his eyes to Elmira, met hers bedewed with tears. "Adieu then, Elmira!"—"Adieu, Soliman!"

They bid each other so many and such tender adieus, that they ended by swearing not to separate for life. The avenues of pleasure through which he had passed so rapidly with his slaves from Asia appeared to him so delicious with Elmira, that he found an inexpressible charm in going through them step by step. But when he had arrived at complete happiness his pleasures had from that time the same defect as before: they became too facile, and in a short time after too languid. The days, so well filled up till then, began to hang heavy. In one of these moments, when complaisance alone retained Soliman with Elmira, "Would it be agreeable to you," said he, "to hear a slave from your own country, whose voice has been greatly commended to me?" Elmira, at this proposal, plainly perceived that she was lost: but to put any constraint on a lover who begins to grow tired is to tire him still more. "I am for anything," said she, "that you please;" and the slave was ordered to enter.

Delia (for that was the singer's name) had the stature of a goddess. Her hair exceeded ebony in blackness, and her skin the whiteness of ivory. Two eyebrows, boldly arched, crowned her sparkling eyes As soon as she began her strain, her lips, which were of the finest vermilion, displayed two rows of pearl set in coral. At first she sung the victories of Soliman, and the hero felt his soul elevated at the remembrance of his triumphs. His pride so far, rather than his taste, applauded the accents of the thrilling voice, which filled the whole saloon with a volume of harmony.

Delia changed her style to sing the charms of pleasure. She took the theorbo, an instrument favourable to the display of a rounded arm, and to the movements of a light and delicate hand. Her voice, more flexible and tender, now

gave forth none but the most touching sounds. Her notes, connected by imperceptible gradations, uttered the delirium of a soul intoxicated with pleasure, or exhausted by passion. The sounds, sometimes expiring on her lips, sometimes swelling, and sinking with rapidity, expressed by turns the sighs of modesty and the vehemence of desire; while her eyes even more than her voice gave animation to these lively descriptions.

Soliman, quite transported, devoured her both with his ears and eyes. "No," said he, "never before did so beautiful a mouth utter such pleasing sounds. With what delight must she, who sings so feelingly of pleasure, inspire and relish it! How charming to draw in that harmonious breath, and to intercept in their passage those sounds animated by love!" The sultan, lost in these reflections, perceived not that all the while he kept beating time on the knee of the trembling Elmira, who, her heart oppressed with jealousy, was scarce able to breathe. "How happy is Delia," said she, in a low voice, to Soliman, "to have so tunable a voice! Alas! it ought to be the organ of my heart! everything that she expresses you have taught me to feel." So said Elmira, but Soliman did not listen to her.

Delia changed her tone a second time for the purpose of celebrating inconstancy. Everything either interesting or amiable in the changeful variety of nature was recapitulated in her song. It seemed like the fluttering of the butterfly over roses, or like the zephyrs, losing themselves among the flowers. "Listen to the turtle," said Delia: "she is faithful but she is sad. See the inconstant warbler: pleasure moves his wings; his bright voice is exerted merely to return thanks to love. Water freezes only in stagnation; a heart never languishes but in constancy. There is but one mortal on earth whom it is possible to love always. Let him change; let him enjoy the advantage of making a thousand hearts happy: all prevent his wishes, or pursue him. They

adore him in their own arms; they love him even in the arms of another. Let him give himself up to our desires, or withdraw himself from them, still he will find love wherever he goes; wherever he goes will he leave the print of love on his footsteps."

Elmira was no longer able to dissemble her vexation and her grief. She got up and retired: the sultan did not recall her; and while she was drowned in tears, repeating a thousand times, "Ah! the ingrate; ah! the traitor!" Soliman, charmed with his divine songstress, proceeded to realise with her some of those pictures which she had drawn so much to the life. The next morning the unhappy Elmira wrote a billet filled with reproach and tenderness, in which she put him in mind of the promise he had made her. "That is but just," said the sultan: "let us send her back to her country, loaded with marks of my favour. This poor girl loved me truly, and I did not behave too well to her."

The first moments of his love for Delia were intoxication; but as soon as he had time for reflection, he perceived that she had more petulance than sensibility, and was more greedy of pleasure than pleased at administering it; in a word, fitter than himself to have a seraglio at command. To feed his illusion, he sometimes invited Delia to let him hear the voice which had enchanted him; but that voice was no longer the same. The impression made by it became every day weaker and weaker by habit; and it was now no more than a slight emotion, when an unforeseen circumstance dissipated it for ever.

The chief officer of the seraglio came to inform the sultan that it was impossible for him to restrain the intractable vivacity of one of the European slaves; that she made a jest of his prohibitions and menaces; and that she answered him only by cutting railleries and immoderate bursts of laughter. Soliman, who was too great a prince to make a state affair of the regulation of his pleasures, was curious to

see this young madcap. He repaired to her, followed by the eunuch. As soon as she saw Soliman, "Heaven be praised!" said she, "here comes a human figure! You are without doubt the sublime sultan, whose slave I have the honour to be. Do me the favour to get rid of this old rascal, who shocks my very sight." The sultan had a good deal of difficulty to refrain from laughing at this beginning. "Roxalana," said he to her (for that was her name), "show some respect, if you please, to the minister of my wishes. You are yet a stranger to the manners of the seraglio; till you are instructed in them, contain yourself and obey."—"A pretty compliment," said Roxalana. "*Obey!* Is that your Turkish gallantry? Sure you must be mightily beloved, if it is in this strain you begin your addresses to the ladies! '*Respect the minister of my wishes!*' You have your wishes, then? and, good Heaven, what must they be like, if they resemble their minister! an old amphibious monster, who keeps us here, penned in, like sheep in a fold, and who prowls round with his frightful eyes always ready to devour us! This is the confidant of your pleasures, and the guardian of our conduct! To give him his due, if you pay him to make yourself hated, he does not cheat you of his wages. We cannot take a step but he growls. He forbids us even to walk, and to receive or pay visits. In a short time, I suppose, he will weigh out the air to us, and give us light by the yard. If you had seen him rave last night, because he found me in these solitary gardens! Did you order him to forbid our going into them? Are you afraid that it should rain men? And if a few should fall from the clouds, there would be no great harm done! Heaven owes us this miracle."

While Roxalana spoke thus, the sultan examined, with surprise, the fire of her looks, and the play of her countenance. "By Mahomet," said he to himself, "here is the prettiest little face in all Asia. Such as these are only made in Europe." Roxalana had nothing beautiful, nothing regular in her features; but, taken all together, they had that piquant

singularity which attracts more than beauty. A speaking look, a fresh and rosy mouth, an arch smile, a nose somewhat turned up, a neat and well-made shape—all this gave her giddiness a charm which disconcerted the gravity of Soliman. But the great, in his situation, have the resource of silence; and Soliman, not knowing how to answer her, fairly walked off, concealing his embarrassment under an air of majesty.

The eunuch asked him what orders he would be pleased to give with respect to this saucy slave. "She is a mere child," replied the sultan: "you must make allowance for her."

The air, the tone, the figure, the disposition of Roxalana had excited in the soul of Soliman an anxiety and emotion which sleep was not able to dispel. As soon as he awoke, he ordered the chief of the eunuchs to come to him. "You seem to me," said he, "to be but little in Roxalana's good graces; to make your peace, go and tell her I will come and drink tea with her." On the arrival of the officer, Roxalana's women hastened to wake her. "What does the ape want with me?" cried she, rubbing her eyes. "I come," replied the eunuch, "from the emperor, to kiss the dust of your feet, and to inform you that he will come and drink tea with the delight of his soul."—"Get away with your strange speeches! There is no dust on my feet, and I do not drink tea so early."

The eunuch retired without replying, and gave an account of his embassy. "She is in the right," said the sultan; "why did you wake her? You do everything wrong." As soon as it was broad day with Roxalana, he went thither. "You are angry with me," said he: "they have disturbed your sleep, and I am the innocent cause of it. There, let us make peace; imitate me: you see that I forget all you said to me yesterday." —"You forget it! So much the worse: I said some excellent things to you. My frankness displeases you, I see: but you will soon grow accustomed to it. And are you not too happy to find a friend in a slave? Yes, a friend who interests herself

in your welfare, and who would teach you to love? Why have you not travelled in my country? They know what love is there: there it is lively and tender; and why?—because it is free. Passion is involuntary, and does not come by force. The yoke of marriage amongst us is much lighter than that of slavery; and yet a husband that is beloved is a prodigy. Everything that takes the name of duty saddens the soul, blasts imagination, cools desire, and takes off that edge of self-love which gives all the relish and seasoning to affection. Now, if it be so difficult to love a husband, how much harder is it to love a master, especially if he has not the address to conceal the fetters he puts upon us?"—"Well, then," replied the sultan, "I will forget nothing to soften your servitude; but you ought in your turn——"—"I *ought!* nothing but what one *ought!* Leave off, I prithee now, these humiliating phrases. They come with a very ill grace from the mouth of a man of gallantry, who has the honour of talking to a pretty woman."—"But, Roxalana, do you forget who I am, and who you are?"—"Who you are, and who I am? You are powerful, I am pretty: and so we are even."—"It may be so," replied the sultan haughtily, "in your country; but here, Roxalana, I am master, and you a slave."—"Yes, I know you have purchased me; but the robber who sold me could transfer to you only those rights over me which he had himself, the rights of rapine and violence, in one word, the rights of a robber; and you are too much a man of honour to think of abusing them. After all, you are my master, because my life is in your hands; but I am no longer your slave, if I know how to despise life; and truly the life one leads here is not worth taking much care of."—"What a frightful notion!" cried the sultan: "do you take me for a barbarian? No, my dear Roxalana; I would make use of my power only to render this life delightful to yourself and me."—"Upon my word," said Roxalana, "the prospect is not very promising. These guards, for instance, so black, so

disgusting, so ugly, are they the Smiles and Sports which here accompany love?"—"These guards are not set upon you alone. I have five hundred women, whom our manners and laws oblige me to keep watched."—"And what is the good of five hundred women?" said she to him, with a confidential air. "It is a kind of state which the dignity of sultan imposes upon me."—"But what do you do with them, pray? for you lend them to nobody."—"Inconstancy," replied the sultan, "introduced this custom. A heart void of love stands in need of variety. Lovers only are constant, and I never was a lover till I saw you. Let not the number of these women give you the shadow of uneasiness: they will serve only to grace your triumph. You will see them all eager to please you, and you will see me attentive to no one but yourself." —"Indeed," said Roxalana, with an air of compassion; "you deserve better luck. It is a pity you are not a plain private gentleman in my country. I might have a weakness for you; for, as a matter of fact, I hate not you but your surroundings. You are much better than a Turk ought to be; you have even something of the Frenchman about you; and, without flattery, I have loved some who were not so deserving as yourself."—"You have loved!" cried Soliman, with horror.—"Oh! of course not! I never thought of such a thing. Do you really expect one to have been proper all one's lifetime, in order to cease to be so with you? Indeed, these Turks are amusing people."—"And you have not been proper? O heavens! what do I hear? I am betrayed; I am lost! Destruction seize the traitors who tried to impose upon me."—"Forgive them," said Roxalana. "The poor creatures are not to blame. The most knowing are often deceived. And then, the misfortune is not very great. Why do not you restore me to my liberty, if you think me unworthy of the honours of slavery."—"Yes, yes, I will restore you to that liberty of which you have made such good use." At these words, the sultan retired in a rage, saying

to himself, "I knew this little turned-up nose must have been in mischief."

It is impossible to describe the confusion into which this imprudent avowal of Roxalana's threw him. Sometimes he had a mind to have her sent away; sometimes that she should be shut up; next that she should be brought to him, and then again that she should be sent away. The great Soliman no longer knew what he said. "My lord," remonstrated the eunuch, "can you fall into despair for a trifle? One girl more or less: is there anything so uncommon in her? Besides, who knows whether the confession she has made be not an artifice to get herself sent back to her own country?"—"What say you? how! can it be possible? It is the very thing. He opens my eyes. Women are not used to make such confessions. It is a trick, a stratagem. Ah! the perfidious hussy! Let me dissemble in my turn: I will drive her to the last extremity.—Hark ye! go and tell her . . . that I invite myself to supper this evening. But no; order the songstress to come here: it is better to send her."

Delia was charged to employ all her art in gaining the confidence of Roxalana. As soon as the latter had heard what she had to say, "What!" said she, "young and handsome as you are, he makes you his go-between, and you have the weakness to obey him? Get you gone: you are not worthy to be my countrywoman. Ah! I see plainly that he is spoilt, and that I alone must take upon me to teach this Turk how to behave. I will send him word that I keep you to sup with me; I must have him make some atonement for his impertinence."—"But, madam, he will take it ill."—"He! I should be glad to see him take anything ill that I please to do."—"But he seemed desirous of seeing you alone."—"Alone! ah! it is not come to that yet; and I shall make him go over a good deal of ground before we have anything to say to each other in private."

The sultan was as much surprised as piqued to learn that

a third person was to be present. However, he repaired early to Roxalana's. As soon as she saw him coming, she ran to meet him with as easy an air as if they had been upon the best footing in the world together. "There," says she, "is a handsome man come to sup with us! Do you like him, Madam? Confess, Soliman, that I am a good friend. Come, draw near, salute the lady. There! very well. Now, thank me. Softly! I do not like to have people dwell too long on their acknowledgments. Wonderful! I assure you he surprises me. He has had but two lessons, and see how he is improved! I do not despair of making him, one day or other, an absolute Frenchman."

Do but imagine the astonishment of a sultan, a sultan who had conquered Asia, to see himself treated like a schoolboy by a slave of eighteen. During supper, her gaiety and extravagance were inconceivable. The sultan was beside himself with transport. He questioned her concerning the manners of Europe. One picture followed another. Our prejudices, our follies, our faults were all laid hold of, all represented. Soliman thought himself in Paris. "The witty rogue!" cried he, "the witty rogue!" From Europe she fell upon Asia. This was much worse: the haughtiness of the men, the imbecility of the women, the ennui of their society, the sulky gravity of their amours—nothing escaped her, though she had seen nothing but cursorily. The seraglio had its turn, and Roxalana began by felicitating the sultan on having been the first to imagine that he could ensure the virtue of the women by the absolute impotence of the blacks. She was preparing to enlarge upon the honour that this circumstance of his reign would do him in history; but he begged her to spare him. "Well," said she, "I perceive that I take up those moments which Delia could employ much better. Throw yourself at her feet to obtain from her one of those airs which, they say, she sings with so much taste and spirit." Delia did not want pressing. Roxalana appeared

charmed: she asked Soliman, in a low voice, for a handkerchief. He gave her one, without the least suspicion of her design. "Madam," said she to Delia, presenting it to her, "I am desired by the sultan to give you the handkerchief: you have well deserved it."—"Oh, to be sure," said Soliman, transported with anger, and presenting his hand to the songstress, retired along with her.

As soon as they were alone, "I confess," said he to her, "that this giddy girl confounds me. You see the style in which she treats me. I have not the courage to be angry with her; in short, I am madly in love with her, and I do not know what method to take to bring her to reason."—"My lord," said Delia, "I believe I have discovered her temper. Authority can do nothing. You have nothing for it but extreme coldness or extreme gallantry. Coldness may pique her; but I am afraid we are too far gone for that. She knows that you love her. She will enjoy the pain that this will cost you, and you will come to sooner than she. Besides, this method is disagreeable and painful; and if one moment's weakness should escape you, you will have all to begin again."—"Well then," said the sultan, "let us try gallantry."

From that time the seraglio saw every day a new festival, of which Roxalana was the object; but she took all this as an homage due to her, without concern or pleasure, but with a cool complaisance. The sultan sometimes asked her, "How did you like those sports, those concerts, those spectacles?"——"Well enough," said she; "but there was something wanting."—"And what?"—"Men and liberty."

Soliman was in despair: he had recourse to Delia. "Upon my word," said the songstress, "I know nothing else that can touch her, at least unless glory undertake the business. Tomorrow you receive the ambassadors of your allies: cannot I bring her to see this ceremony behind a curtain, which may conceal us from the eyes of your court?"—"And do you think," said the sultan, "that this would make any impression on

her?"—"I hope so," said Delia: "the women of her country love glory."—"You charm me," cried Soliman. "Yes, my dear Delia, I shall owe my happiness to you."



"Get you gone," said she to him, "out of my sight, and never see me more."

At his return from this ceremony, which he took care to render as pompous as possible, he repaired to Roxalana. "Get you gone," said she to him, "out of my sight, and never see

me more." The sultan remained motionless and dumb with astonishment. "Is this, then," pursued she, "your art of love? Glory and grandeur, the only good things worthy to touch the soul, are reserved for you alone; shame and oblivion, the most insupportable of all evils, are my portion; and you would have me love you! I hate you worse than death." The sultan would fain have turned this reproach into raillery. "Nay, but I am serious," continued she. "If my lover had but a hut, I would share his hut with him, and be content. He has a throne; I will share his throne, or he is no lover of mine. If you think me unworthy to reign over the Turks, send me back to my own country, where all pretty women are sovereigns, and much more absolute than I should be here, for they reign over hearts."—"So the sovereignty of mine is not sufficient for you?" said Soliman, with the most tender air in the world.—"No, I desire no heart which enjoys pleasures that I have not. Talk to me no more of your entertainments, they are all mere pastimes for children. I must have embassies."—"But, Roxalana, you are either mad or you dream."—"And pray what do you find so extravagant in my desiring to reign with you? Am I formed to disgrace a throne? And do you think that I should have displayed less greatness and dignity than yourself in assuring our subjects and allies of our protection?"—"I think," said the sultan, "that you would do everything with grace; but it is not in my power to satisfy your ambition, and I beseech you to think no more of it."—"Think no more of it! Oh! I promise you I shall think of nothing else, and I shall from henceforth dream of nothing but a sceptre, a crown, an embassy."

She kept her word. By next morning she had already contrived the design of her diadem; and was only in doubt about the colour of the riband which was to tie it. She ordered rich stuffs to be brought her for her habits of ceremony; and as soon as the sultan appeared, she asked his opinion on the choice. He did all he could to divert

her from this idea; but contradiction plunged her into the deepest melancholy; and to draw her out of it again, he was obliged to flatter her illusion. Then she displayed the most brilliant gaiety. He seized these moments to talk to her of love; but without listening, she talked to him of politics. All her answers to the harangues of the deputies, on her accession to the crown, were already prepared. She even drafted edicts for the territories of the Grand Seignior. She would have vineyards planted and opera-houses built; eunuchs done away with, because they were good for nothing; jealous husbands imprisoned, because they disturbed society; and all self-interested persons punished, because sooner or later they became rogues.

The sultan amused himself for some time with these follies; nevertheless he still burnt with the most violent love, without any hope of being happy. On the least suspicion of violence she became furious, and tried to kill herself. On the other hand, Soliman could not pronounce the ambition of Roxalana so very foolish: "For, after all," said he, "is it not cruel that I alone should be deprived of the happiness of associating in my fortune a woman whom I esteem and love? All my subjects may have a lawful wife: an absurd law forbids marriage to me alone." Thus spoke love, but policy put him to silence. He took the step of confiding to Roxalana the reasons which restrained him. "I would make it," said he, "my happiness to leave nothing wanting to yours: but our manners"—"Idle stories!"—"Our laws"—"Old songs!"—"The priests"—"What business is it of theirs?"—"The people and the soldiery"—"What is it to them? will they be more wretched when you have me for your consort? You must have very little love, if you have so little courage!"

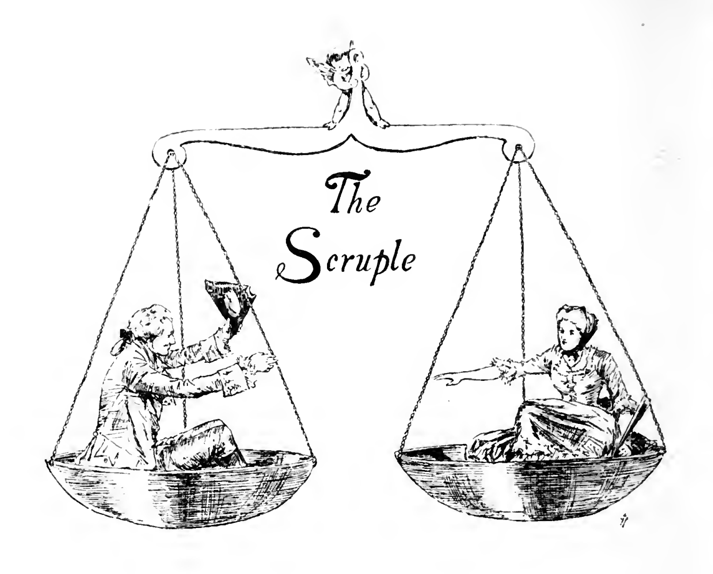
She prevailed so far that Soliman was ashamed of being so timid. He ordered the mufti, the vizir, the caimacan, the aga of the sea, and the aga of the janissaries, to come to

him; and he said to them, "I have exalted, as far as I was able, the glory of the Crescent; I have established the power and the peace of my empire; and I desire nothing, by way of recompense for my labours, but to enjoy with the good-will of my subjects a blessing which they all enjoy. Some law or other, one that does not come down to us from the Prophet, forbids to sultans the sweets of the marriage-bed: therefore I find myself reduced to slaves, whom I despise: and I have resolved to marry a woman whom I adore. Prepare my people for this marriage. If they approve it, I receive their approbation as a mark of their gratitude; but if they dare to murmur at it, tell them that I will have it so." The assembly received the sultan's orders with a respectful silence, and the people followed their example.

Soliman, transported with joy and love, went to fetch Roxalana, in order to lead her to the mosque; and said to himself in a low voice, as he was conducting her thither, "Is it possible that a little turned-up nose should overthrow the laws of an empire?"

Note to "SOLIMAN THE SECOND"

I do not know where or when the tradition of the *nez à la Roxelane* arose. Knolles, our historian of the Turks, writing a full century and a half before Marmontel, has much to say of Roxalana's domination over the sultan, and her plots against her stepson Mustapha; but as she had by that time "grown very devout," it will be obvious at once that the stage was later. Nor, in the portrait which ranks among the admirably engraved series decorating Knolles's work, is there much sign of the *petit nez retroussé;* indeed, the process of subjugating the emperor, which he also gives at great length, is remarkably different. It is unfortunate, by the way, that there is no good word in English for *retroussé*. "Turned-up" is bad enough; "snub," "pug," "cocked," &c., are far worse; and Lord Tennyson's "tip-tilted," the only serious poetical attempt, is not very happy. For the prettiest noses of the *retroussé* type, such as the eighteenth century loved, and such as may be seen in the work of La Tour and Greuze, are not "tilted" at the "tip" at all—the outline consists of a pair of curves, the depression at the bridge rising softly and rounding the tip without any sharp "tilt."



The Scruple

HEAVEN be praised," said Belisa, on going out of mourning for her husband. "I have now fulfilled a grievous and painful piece of duty! It was time it should be over. To see one's self delivered up at the age of sixteen to a man of whom one knows nothing; to pass the best days of one's life in ennui, dissimulation, and servitude; to be the slave and victim of a love which one inspires, but cannot partake: what a trial for virtue! I have undergone it, and am now discharged. I have nothing to reproach myself with; for though I did not love my husband, I pretended to love him, and that is much more heroic. I was faithful to him, notwithstanding his jealousy: in short, I have *mourned* for him. This, I think, is carrying goodness of heart as far as it can go. At length I am restored to myself, I depend on nothing but my own will, and it is only from to-day that I date the beginning of my life. Ah! how my

heart would take fire if any one should succeed in pleasing me! But let me consider well before I engage this heart of mine, and let me not, if possible, run the risk either of ceasing to love, or of ceasing to be loved. Cease to be loved! That, I believe, will be difficult," resumed she, as she consulted her looking-glass: "but to cease to love is still worse. How could one for any considerable time feign a passion one did not feel? I should never be able to do it. To leave a man after one has taken to him is a piece of effrontery beyond me; and then complaints, despair, the scandal of a rupture, with all the rest of it, is frightful. Let me love, since Heaven has given me a susceptible heart; but let me love my whole life long, and not flatter myself with those transient likings, those caprices which are so often taken for love. I have time to choose and to prove myself: the only thing to be done to avoid all surprise is to form a distinct and exact notion of love. I have read that love is a passion which of two souls makes but one, which penetrates them at the same time, and fills them one with the other, which detaches them from everything, supplies the want of everything, and makes their mutual happiness their only care and desire. Such, without doubt, is love; and according to this idea of it, it will be very easy for me to distinguish in myself, and in others, the illusion from the reality."

Her first experiment was made on a young magistrate, with whom the disposition of her late husband's effects gave her some intercourse. The President de Sovrane, with an agreeable figure, a cultivated understanding, a sweet and affectionate temper, was simple in his dress, easy in his manner, and modest in his conversation. He valued himself on being a connoisseur neither in equipages nor in fineries. He talked not of his horses to women, nor of his success in love to men. He had all the talents becoming his place without ostentation, and all the agreeable qualities of a man of the world

without being a coxcomb. He was the same in court and in company: not that he gave judgment at an entertainment, or made jokes when he heard causes; but as he had not the least affectation, he was always without disguise.

Belisa was touched with such uncommon merit. He had gained her confidence; he obtained her friendship, and under that name the heart goes a great way. The affairs of Belisa's husband being settled, "May I be permitted," said the President one day to the widow, "to ask you one question in confidence? Do you propose to remain free, or will the sacrifice of your liberty make one man more happy?"—"No, sir," said she; "I have too much delicacy ever to make it any man's duty to live only for me."—"That duty would be a very pleasing one," replied the gallant magistrate, "and I greatly fear, that without your consent, more than one lover will impose it upon himself."—"So much the better," said Belisa; "let them love me without being obliged to it: that is the most pleasing of all homages."—"Yet, madam, I cannot suspect you of being a coquette."—"Oh, you would do me great injustice if you did, for I abominate coquetry."—"But to desire to be loved without returning love!"—"And who, sir, has told you that I shall not love? Such resolutions are not taken at my age. I would neither constrain nor be constrained: that is all."—"Excellent! the connection is to cease when the inclination ceases?"—"I should like both to be eternal, and for that reason I would avoid even the shadow of constraint. I feel myself capable of loving all my life long in liberty; but to tell you the truth, I would not promise to love two days in slavery."

The President saw plainly that he must humour her delicacy, and content himself with being on the footing of a friend. He had the modesty to bring himself to that, and from thenceforward every little tenderness of love was practised in order to touch her. He succeeded. I shall not mention the degrees by which Belisa's sensibility was

every day more and more affected; let it suffice, that she was now come to that pass when prudence, in equipoise with love, waits only one slight effort to turn the scale. They were at this point, and were *tête-à-tête.* The President's eyes, inflamed with love, devoured the charms of Belisa; he pressed her hand tenderly. Belisa, trembling, could hardly breathe. The President solicited her with the impassioned eloquence of desire. "Ah! President," said she to him at last, "could you possibly deceive me?" At these words the last sigh of modesty seemed to have escaped her lips. "No, madam," said he, "it is my heart, it is Love itself that has just spoken by my mouth, and may I die at your feet if——" As he fell at Belisa's feet, his knee came upon one of the paws of *Shock*, the young widow's favourite lap-dog. *Shock* set up a howl. "Lord, sir, how awkward you are!" cried Belisa angrily. The President coloured, and was disconcerted. He took *Shock* to his bosom, kissed the injured paw, asked his pardon a thousand times, and entreated him to solicit his forgiveness. *Shock*, recovered of his pain, returned the President's caresses. "You see, madam, he has a good heart: he forgives me; it is a fair example for you." Belisa made no reply. She had fallen into a profound reverie; she was cold. He tried at first to interpret her gravity as a jest, and threw himself again at Belisa's feet in order to appease her. "Pray, sir, get up," said she; "these freedoms displease me, and I do not know that I have given any room for them."

The President's astonishment may be imagined. For two whole minutes he remained confounded without being able to bring out a word. "What, madam?" said he at last: "can it be possible that so trivial an accident has drawn your anger upon me?"—"Not at all, sir; but without anger I may take it ill that any one should throw himself at my feet. That situation only suits happy lovers, and I esteem you too much to suspect your having dared to form any such pretensions." —"I do not see, madam," replied the President with emotion,

"why a hope founded on love should render me less worthy of esteem; but may I presume to ask you, since love is a crime in your eyes, what is the nature of the sentiment you have shown for me?"—"Friendship, sir, friendship; and I desire you very seriously to keep to that."—"I ask your pardon, madam; I could have sworn that it had been something else; I see plainly that I mistook the motive."—"That may be, sir; many others mistake it as well as yourself." The President could no longer bear up against so strange an instance of caprice. He went away in despair, and was not recalled.

As soon as Belisa found herself alone, "I had nearly made a pretty fool of myself!" said she. "I have seen the moment when my weakness was about to yield to a man whom I did not love. They may well say that we know nothing less than ourselves. I could have sworn that I adored him, that there was nothing which I was not disposed to sacrifice to him. No such thing: he happens, without intending it, to hurt my little dog, and this violent love immediately gives place to anger. A dog affects me more than he, and without a moment's hesitation I take the part of this little beast against the man in the world whom I thought I loved best. A very lively passion, indeed—mighty solid and tender! See how we take ideas for sentiments! The brain is heated, and we fancy the heart inflamed: we proceed to all manner of follies; the illusion ceases, and disgust succeeds. We have to bear the tedium of being constant without love, or inconstant with imprudence. Oh, my dear *Shock*, what do I not owe you? It is you who have undeceived me. But for you I should perhaps have been at this moment overwhelmed with confusion, and torn with remorse."

Whether Belisa did or did not love the President (for questions of this nature turn merely on equivocal terms), it is certain that, by dint of saying to herself that she did not love him, she succeeded so far as to convince herself of it: and a young officer soon confirmed her in her opinion.

Lindor, after being one of the king's pages, had just obtained a troop of horse. The freshness of youth, the impatience of desire, the giddiness and levity which are graceful at sixteen and ridiculous at thirty, gave this young man of quality favour in the eyes of Belisa, to whose husband's family he had the honour to belong. Lindor was extremely fond of himself, and not without reason: he knew that he was well made, and of a charming figure. He said so sometimes: but he laughed so heartily after he had said it; he discovered, as he laughed, so fresh a mouth and such fine teeth, that these *naïvetés* were pardoned at his age. Besides, he mingled such lofty and noble sentiments with the puerilities of self-love, that the whole together was very engaging. He was desirous of having a handsome mistress and a good war-horse. He would view himself in the glass as he went through the Prussian exercise. He would beg Belisa to lend him the "Sopha,"[1] and asked her if she had read Folard's *Polybius*. He thought it long till spring, that he might have an elegant suit, in case of peace, or make a campaign if it should be war. This mixture of frivolousness and heroism is perhaps the most seducing of all things in the eyes of a woman. An indistinct idea that this pretty little creature, who trifles at the toilette, who caresses himself, who admires his own person, will perhaps in two months' time throw himself in the face of a battery upon a squadron of the enemy, or climb like a grenadier up a mined breach—this idea gives to the pretty ways of a fop an air of the marvellous, which creates admiration and tenderness. But this foppery sits well on none but young gentlemen of the army—a piece of advice, by the way, to pretty fellows of every condition.

Belisa was affected by the simple and airy graces of Lindor. He had conceived a passion for her from the first visit. A young page is in haste to be in love. "My beautiful cousin," said he to her one day (for so he called her on account of

[1] The title of a loose novel.

their alliance), "I ask of Heaven but two things—to distinguish myself first against the English, and with you."—"You are a giddy creature," said she, "and I advise you to desire neither one nor the other: one will happen perhaps but too soon, and the other will never happen at all!"—"Never happen at all! That is very strong, my sweet cousin. But I expected this answer, so it does not discourage me. Come, I will lay you a wager that before my second campaign you will cease to be cruel. Now that I have nothing to plead for me but my age and my face, you treat me like a child; but when you shall have heard it said, 'He was at such an action, his regiment charged on such an occasion, he distinguished himself, he took a post, he has run a thousand risks,' then your little heart will go pit-a-pat with fear, with pleasure, perhaps with love: who knows? If I were wounded, for instance! Oh! that is very moving! For my part, if I were a woman, I should wish that my lover had been wounded in the wars. I would kiss his scars, I should have infinite pleasure in counting them. My beautiful cousin, I shall show you mine. You will never be able to hold out."—"Go, you foolish boy; do your duty like a gallant man, and do not shock me with presages that make me tremble."—"You see whether I spoke truth or not? I make you tremble beforehand. Ah! if the idea alone affects you, what will the reality do? Courage, my pretty cousin, you may trust yourself to me: will not you give me something in advance upon account of the laurels that I am going to gather?"

Similar nonsense passed between them every day. Belisa, who pretended to laugh, was not the less sensibly touched; but that vivacity which made so great an impression upon her heart, prevented Lindor from perceiving it. He was neither knowing enough nor attentive enough to observe the gradations of sentiment, and to draw his advantage from them. Not but he was as enterprising as politeness requires; but a look intimidated him, and the fear of displeasing

influenced him as much as his impatience to be happy. Thus two months passed away in slight attempts, without any decisive success. However, their mutual passion grew more and more animated; and feeble as Belisa's resistance was, she was growing tired of it herself, when the signal for war gave the alarm to every one's loves.

At this terrible signal all their industry was interrupted: one man flies away without waiting an answer to a most gallant billet; another fails in an assignation that would have crowned all his wishes: all is revolution in the whole empire of pleasure!

Lindor had scarce time to take leave of Belisa. She had reproached herself a hundred times for a rigour which she did not feel. "This poor youth," said she, "loves me with all his soul: nothing can be more natural or tender than the expression of his sentiments. His figure is a model for a painter or a statuary. He is beautiful as the day: giddy indeed, but who is not so at his age? And he has an excellent heart. It rests but with him to amuse himself: he would find few women cruel; yet he sees only me, he breathes only for me, and I treat him with such disdain! I wonder how he bears it. I confess that if I were in his place I should soon leave this rigid Belisa to mope with her own virtue; for, in fact, though propriety is well enough sometimes, yet to be always proper——!"

As she was making these reflections, news arrived that negotiations for peace were broken off, and that officers had orders to rejoin their corps without a moment's delay. At this news all her blood froze in her veins. "He is going," cried she, her heart struck and penetrated. "He is going to fight, going to die perhaps, and I shall never see him more!" Lindor arrived in his uniform. "I am come to bid you adieu, my sweet cousin; I am going, going to face the enemy. Half of my wish is fulfilled; and I hope that at my return you will fulfil the other half. I love you

dearly, my sweet cousin! Do you sometimes remember your little cousin. He will return faithful: he gives you his word for it. If he is slain, indeed, he will not return; but in that case his ring and watch shall be sent you. Do you see this little dog in enamel? In it you shall retrace my image, my fidelity, my tenderness, and you will sometimes kiss it." As he said these last words, he smiled tenderly and his eyes were bedewed with tears. Belisa, who could no longer retain her own, said to him with the most sorrowful air in the world, "You quit me very gaily, Lindor. You say you love me, is this a lover's farewell? I thought it had been dreadful to banish one's self from what one loves. But this is not the time to reproach you. Come, embrace me." Lindor in transport made very free use of this permission, and Belisa was not offended. "And when are you to depart?" said she—"Immediately!"—"Immediately? what! do not you sup with me?"—"Impossible."—"I had a thousand things to say to you."—"Say them quickly then: my horses wait."—"You are very cruel to refuse me one evening!"—"Ah! my pretty cousin, I would give you my life; but my honour is at stake: my hours are numbered; I must be punctual to a minute. Think, if there should be an action and I not there; I should be undone: your little cousin would be unworthy of you. Suffer me to deserve you."

Belisa embraced him anew, bathing him at the same time with her tears. "Go," said she; "I should be distracted if I brought the least reproach upon you; your honour is as dear to me as my own. Be prudent; expose yourself only just as much as duty requires, and return such as I now see you. You do not give me time to say more; but we will write to each other. Adieu."—"Adieu, my sweet cousin."—"Adieu, adieu, my dear boy!"

It is thus that in our nation gallantry is the soul of honour, as honour is the soul of our armies. Our ladies need not take the initiative with our warriors, in order to make

them fight; but the contempt with which they treat a poltroon, and the favour they show to men of courage, make their lovers intrepid.

Belisa passed the night in the most profound sorrow, and bathed her bed with her tears. Next day she wrote to Lindor. All the most touching things that a tender and delicate soul could inspire were expressed in her letter. Oh, ye women, who are so ill educated! who is it that teaches you to write so well? Does Nature take pleasure to humble us by giving you your revenge?

Lindor in his reply, which was full of fire and disorder, expressed by turns the two passions of his soul, military ardour and love. Belisa's impatience disturbed her rest till she received this answer. Their correspondence became regular, and continued without interruption for half the campaign; and the last letter they wrote was always the warmest; the last that was expected, always the most desired. Lindor, to his misfortune, had a suspicious confidant. "You are bewitched," said this bosom friend to him, "with the passion you inspire. Ah, if you did but know what this confusion is! I know women. Will you make one trial of your mistress? Write her word that you have lost an eye; I will bet she advises you to bear it, and forget her." Lindor, quite certain of triumph, consented to make the trial; and as he knew not how to lie, his friend dictated the letters. Belisa was distracted: the image of Lindor presented itself to her imagination, but with one eye wanting. That large black patch made him unrecognisable. "What a pity!" said she, sighing. "His two eyes were so brilliant! Mine met them with so much pleasure! Love painted himself there with so many charms! Yet he is only the more interesting to my heart on this account, and I ought to love him the more. He must be disconsolate; and he dreads nothing so much as the appearing less amiable to me. Let me write to him, to encourage, to comfort him, if it be possible." This was the first time that

Belisa was ever obliged to say to herself, *Let me write to him!* Her letter was cold, in spite of herself: she perceived it, tore it, and writ it over anew. The expressions were strong enough; but the turn of them was forced, and the style laboured. That black patch, instead of a fine eye, clouded her imagination, and chilled her conceptions.

"Ah! let me flatter myself no longer," said she, tearing her letter a second time: "this poor youth is no longer beloved; an eye lost turns my soul topsy-turvy. I have tried to play the heroine; and I am but a weak woman: let me not affect sentiments above my character. Lindor does not deserve to be deceived: he reckons upon a generous and tender soul; but if I cannot love him, I ought at least to undeceive him: his contempt be all my punishment." "I am in despair," writ she to him, "and am much more to be pitied than yourself: you have lost only an attraction, but I am about to lose your esteem, as I have already lost my own. I thought myself worthy to love you, and to be beloved by you: I am no longer so. My heart flattered itself with being superior to events: a single accident has changed me. Console yourself, sir! you will always please any reasonable woman; and after the humiliating confession I have now made, you have no longer any occasion to regret me."

Lindor was distracted on reading this billet. The "*sir*" especially appeared to him an atrocious insult. "*Sir!*" cried he. "Ah! the perfidious woman! Her little cousin, *Sir!* This *Sir* is for the man with one eye." He went to find out his friend. "I told you so," said the confidant. "Now is the time to take your revenge, unless you had rather await the end of the campaign, in order to give your heroine the pleasure of a surprise."—"No, I will put her to confusion this very day," replied the unfortunate Lindor. He then wrote to her, that he was quite transported that he had tried her; that *Sir* had still got his two eyes, but that those eyes would never view her more, save as the most ungrateful of women. Belisa

was confounded, and from that instant resolved to renounce the world, and bury herself in the country. "Let me go and vegetate," said she; "I am fit for nothing else."

In the neighbourhood of her property was a kind of philosopher in the flower of his age, who, after having enjoyed everything for six months of the year in town, used for the other six months to enjoy himself in voluptuous solitude. He paid his respects to Belisa. "You have," said she to him, "the reputation of wisdom: what is your plan of life?"—"Plan, madam! I never had any," replied the Count de Pruli. "I do everything that amuses me, I seek after everything that I like, and I carefully avoid everything that makes me dull, or displeases me."—"Do you live alone? or do you see company?"—"I see our parson sometimes, to whom I teach morality; I converse with husbandmen, who are better informed than all our *literati;* I give a ball to some of the prettiest village girls in the world; I make lotteries of laces and ribands for them, and I marry off the most amorous."—"What!" said Belisa with astonishment, "do these folks know what love is?"—"Better than we do, madam—a hundred times better than we do. They love like turtles: they give me an appetite for it."—"You will confess, however, that they love without delicacy."—"Alas! madam, delicacy is a refinement of art; they have the natural instinct, and that instinct renders them happy. People talk of love in town, but it is practised only in the country. They feel what we are clever over. I have tried, like other people, to love and be loved in the world: but caprice and convention arrange and disarrange everything—a connection is nothing more than a rencounter. Here inclination makes the choice: you will see in the sports that I give them, how their simple and tender hearts seek each other unconsciously and by mutual attraction."—"You give me," said Belisa, "a picture of the country beyond my expectation. These people are said to deserve so much pity."—"They did, madam, some years ago; but I have found out

the secret of rendering their condition more agreeable."—"Oh! you shall tell me your secret," interrupted Belisa briskly; "I want to make use of it too."—"It is your own fault if you do not. It is this: I have an income of forty thousand livres a year; of this I spend ten or twelve at Paris in the two seasons that I pass there; eight or ten at my house in the country; and by this management I have twenty thousand livres to throw away on exchanges."—"What exchanges?"—"I have lands well cultivated, meadows well watered, orchards well fenced, and well planted. Well, Lucas, Blaise, Nicolas, my neighbours and my good friends, have grounds lying fallow, or impoverished; they have not wherewith to cultivate them; I swap mine with them for theirs; and the same extent of land which hardly maintained them, makes them rich after two crops. The ground which was barren under their hands becomes fertile in mine. I choose the seed for it, the manner of planting, the manure, the husbandry that suits it; and as soon as it is in good condition, I bethink me of some new exchange. These are my amusements."—"Charming!" cried Belisa: "you understand agriculture then?"—"A little, madam, and I instruct myself in it. I confront the theory of the learned with the experience of farmers; I endeavour to correct what I see defective in the speculations of the one and in the practice of the other, and the study is amusing."—"Oh! I believe you, and I would fain take it up. Why, you ought to be adored in these parts: these poor labourers ought to consider you as their father."—"Yes, madam, we have a great affection for each other."—"I am very happy, count, that chance has given me such a neighbour! Let us see each other often, I entreat of you: I want to follow your labours, to adopt your method, and become your rival in the hearts of these good people."—"You cannot, madam, have any rivals of either sex, wherever it is your desire to please, and even where it is not."

Such was their first interview; and from this moment

you might see Belisa a villager, entirely taken up with agriculture, conversing with farmers, and reading nothing but the "Complete System of Agriculture." The count invited her to one of his holiday feasts, and presented her to the peasants as a new benefactress, or rather as their sovereign. She was a witness of the love and respect they had for him. Sentiments of this kind are catching; they are so natural and so tender; it is the highest of all encomiums, and Belisa was touched with them even to jealousy; but how distant was this jealousy from hatred! "It must be confessed," said she, "that they have great reason to love him. Even putting his benefactions aside, nobody in the world is more amiable."

From this time the most intimate, and the most apparently philosophical, intercourse was established between them. Their conversation turned only on natural studies, on the means of renovating this earth, our ancient nurse, who exhausts herself for the sake of her children. Botany pointed out to them the plants salutary to the flocks and herbs, and those that were hurtful; mechanics afforded them the power to raise water at a small expense to the top of dry hills, and to relieve the fatigues of animals destined to labour; natural history taught them how to calculate the economical inconveniences and advantages in the choice of these animals; practice confirmed or corrected their observations; and they made their experiments in a small scale, in order to render them less expensive. The holiday came round, and their sports suspended their studies.

Belisa and the philosopher mingled in the dances of the villagers. Belisa perceived with surprise that not one of them was taken up with admiring her. "You will now," said she to her friend, "suspect me of a very strange piece of coquetry; but I will not dissemble with you. I have been told a hundred times that I was handsome; I have likewise, far beyond these peasants, the advantage of dress;

yet I do not see, in the eyes of the young country fellows, any traces of emotion at the sight of me. They think only of their companions; they have no souls but for them."—"Nothing is more natural, madam," said the count. "Desire never comes without some ray of hope; and these poor people find you no otherwise beautiful than as they do the stars and the flowers."— "You surprise me," said Belisa: "is it hope that renders us susceptible?"—"No, but it directs our sensibility."—"Then we never love but with the hope of pleasing?"—"No, to be sure, madam; or else who could help loving you?"—"So a philosopher can be gallant?" replied Belisa, with a smile.—"I speak the truth, madam, and am no philosopher; but if I deserved that name, I should only have the more sensibility. A true philosopher is a man, and glories in being so. Wisdom never contradicts nature, but when nature is in the wrong." Belisa blushed, the count was embarrassed, and they sat for some time with their eyes fixed on the ground, without daring to break silence. The count endeavoured to renew the conversation on the beauties of the country; but their discourse was confused, broken, and without coherence; they no longer knew what they said, and still less what they were going to say. They parted at last, she thoughtful, he absent, and both afraid that they had said too much.

The youth of the neighbouring villages assembled the next day, in order to give them a feast. Its sprightliness composed all its ornament. Belisa was transported at it; but the conclusion surprised her. The master of the feast had made songs in praise of her and the count, and the couplets closed by saying that Belisa was the elm, and the count the ivy. The count knew not whether he should silence them, or take the matter in jest; but Belisa was offended at it. "Pardon them, madam," said the count to her, as he conducted her home: "these good people speak what they think, and know no better. I should have put them to silence, but that I had

not the courage to make them unhappy." Belisa gave him no answer, and he retired overwhelmed with sorrow at the impression this innocent sport had made on her.



They sat for some time with their eyes fixed on the ground, without daring to break silence.

"How unlucky am I!" said Belisa, after the departure of the count. "See, here is another man I am going to love. It is so clear, that even these peasants perceive it: it will be

with him, as with all others, a slight flame, a spark. No, I will see him no more. It is shameful to be desirous of inspiring a passion when we are not susceptible of it ourselves. The count would give himself up to me without reserve and with the greatest confidence: I should make a very estimable man unhappy if I were to break with him." The next day he sent to know if she was to be seen. "What shall I do? If I refuse him to-day, I must see him to-morrow; if I persist in not seeing him more, what will he think of this change? What has he done that can have displeased me? Shall I leave him to think that I mistrust him or myself? After all, what if he should assure me that he loves me? And if he should love, am I obliged to love him? I will bring him to reason; I will give him a sketch of my character; he will esteem me the more for it: I must see him." So the count came.

"I am going to surprise you," said she to him; "I have been on the point of breaking with you."—"With me, madam! why? What is my crime?"—"That of being amiable and dangerous. I assure you that I came here in quest of repose; that I fear nothing so much as love; that I am not formed for a solid engagement; that I have the most fickle and inconstant soul in the world; that I despise transitory likings; and that I have not a sufficient fund of sensibility to entertain a durable passion. This is my character: I give you warning. I can answer for myself with respect to friendship; but as to love, you must not depend on me; and that I may have no cause to reproach myself, I would neither inspire it, nor be inspired with it myself."—"Your sincerity encourages mine," replied the count; "you shall now know me in my turn. I have conceived for you, without the least suspicion or intention, a most tender and violent love: it is the happiest thing that could have happened to me, and I resign myself to it with all my heart. Say what you please to me. You think yourself light and inconstant: you are nothing of the kind. I think I know the character of your soul better than you do."

—"No, sir, I have tried myself, and now you shall judge." She told him the story of the President, and that of the young page.

"You loved them, madam, you loved them : you discourage yourself without cause. Your anger against the President was without consequence. The first emotion is always for the dog, but the second for the lover : so nature has ordered it. As to the cooling of your love towards the page, that would not have been more durable. A lost eye always produces this effect; but by degrees we become accustomed to it. As to the duration of a passion, I must be ingenuous with you. What a madman is he who requires impossibilities! I ardently desire to please you ; I shall make it the happiness of my life : but if your inclination should happen to grow faint, it would be a misfortune, but no crime. What! because there is no pleasure in life without its alloy, must we deprive ourselves of everything, renounce everything? No, madam, we must make choice of what is good, and pardon, both in ourselves and others, what is not quite so well, or what is really evil. We lead an easy, quiet life here; nothing but love is wanting to embellish it; let us make the experiment. If love should vanish, friendship still remains; and as vanity has no share in it, the friendship that survives love is the sweeter, the more intimate, and the more tender."

"Really, sir," said she, "this is strange philosophy."—"Simple and natural, madam! I could make romances as well as another, but life is not a romance: our principles, as well as our sentiments, ought to be founded in nature. Nothing is easier than to imagine prodigies of love; but all such heroes exist only in the brains of authors : they say what they please; let us do what we can. It is a misfortune, without doubt, to cease to please; it is a greater to cease to love ; but the height of misery is to pass one's life in fear and self-constraint. Confide in yourself, madam, and deign to confide in me. It is cruel enough not to be able to love always, without dooming

one's self never to love at all. Let us imitate our villagers: they do not examine whether they shall love long; it is sufficient for them to feel that they love. I surprise you? You have been brought up in the region of chimeras. Believe me, you have a good disposition. Return to truth; suffer yourself to be guided by Nature: she will conduct you much better than Art, which loses itself in the void, and reduces sentiment to nothing by dint of analysing it."

If Belisa was not persuaded, she was much less confirmed in her first resolution; and from the moment that reason wavers, it is easy to overturn it. Belisa's submitted without difficulty, and never did mutual love render two hearts more happy! Resigned with the utmost freedom one to the other, they forgot the world, they forgot themselves. All the faculties of their souls, united in one, formed a mere vortex of fire, of which love was the centre and pleasure the fuel.

This first ardour abated, and Belisa was alarmed; but the count reassured her. They returned to their rural amusements. Belisa discovered that nature was embellished, that the heavens were more serene, and the country more delightful; the sports of the villagers pleased her more than before: they recalled a delicious remembrance. Their labours became more interesting. "My lover," said she to herself, "is the god who encourages them: his humanity, his generosity are the rivulets which fertilise these fields." She loved to converse with the husbandmen on the benefits showered upon them by this mortal, whom they called their father. Love brought home to herself all the good they said of him. Thus she passed the whole summer in loving, in admiring him, in seeing him make others happy, and in making him happy herself.

Belisa had proposed to the count to pass the winter out of town, and he had answered her with a smile, "With all my heart." But as soon as the country began to grow bare, when walking was impracticable, when the days became rainy,

the mornings cold, and the evenings long, Belisa perceived with bitterness that weariness took possession of her soul, and that she wanted to revisit Paris. She confessed it with her usual frankness. "I told you so beforehand; you would not believe me: the event but too well justifies the ill opinion I had of myself."—"What event?"—"Ah! my dear count, since I must tell you, I feel ennui: I love you no longer."—"You feel ennui: that is very possible," replied the count, with a smile: "but you do not love me the less: it is the country that you love no more."—"Alas! sir, why do you flatter me? All places, all seasons are agreeable with those we love."—"Yes, in romances, I have told you so already, but not in nature."—"It is in vain for you to say so," insisted Belisa; "I know full well that two months ago I could have been happy with you in a desert."—"Without doubt, madam, such is the intoxication of a growing passion; but this first flame lasts only for a time. Love, when once made happy, grows calm and moderate. The soul, less agitated from that instant, begins to become sensible to impressions from without: we are no longer alone in the world; we begin to feel the necessity of dissipation and amusement."—"Ah! sir, to what do you reduce love?"—"To truth, my dear Belisa."—"To nothing, my dear count, to nothing. You cease to be my only happiness; I have therefore ceased to love you."—"No, my soul's idol, no, I have not lost your heart, and I shall be always dear to you."—"Always dear; yes, to be sure; but in what way?"—"As I would wish to be."—"Alas! I perceive my own injustice too clearly to conceal it from myself."—"No, madam, you are not unjust. You love me sufficiently: I am content, and would not be loved more. Will you be more hard to please than I?"—"Yes, sir, I shall never forgive myself for having being able to feel ennui with the most lovable man in the world."—"And I, madam, and I, who have nothing to boast of, feel it also at times with the most adorable of all women, and I forgive myself for it."—"What! sir, are

you ever tired of me?"—"Even of you. Nevertheless, I love you more than my life. Are you satisfied now?"—"Come, sir, let us return to Paris!"—"Yes, madam, with all my heart; but remember, the month of May will find us in the country again."—"I don't believe it."—"I assure you it will, and more fond than ever."

Belisa, on her return to town, began to give herself up to all the amusements that the winter occasions, with an avidity which she thought insatiable. The count, on his side, abandoned himself to the torrent of the world, but with less eagerness. By degrees Belisa's ardour abated. The suppers appeared long to her: she grew tired at the play. The count took care to see her seldom; his visits were short, and he chose those hours when she was surrounded by a multitude of adorers.

One day she asked him in a very low voice, "What do you think of Paris?"—"Everything now amuses me, nothing absorbs me now."—"Why do not you come and sup with me?"—"You have seen me so often, madam. I am discreet; the world has its turn, and I shall have mine."—"You are still persuaded, then, that I love you?"—"I never talk of love in town. What think you, madam, of the new opera?" pursued he aloud, and the conversation became general.

Belisa was always comparing the count with all the best people of her society, and the comparison always turned out in his favour. "Nobody," said she, "has such candour, such simplicity, such evenness of character; nobody has such goodness of soul and elevation of sentiment. When I recollect our conversation, all these young people seem nothing more than well-taught parrots. He may well doubt that one can cease to love him after having known him; but no: it is not the good opinion he has of himself, it is the good opinion he has of me that gives him this confidence. How happy should I be were it well founded!"

Such were Belisa's reflections; and the more she perceived

her inclination for him revive, the more she was at ease with herself. In short, the desire of seeing him again became so strong, that she could not resist writing to him. He repaired to her; and accosting her with a smile, "What, madam," said he, "a *tête-à-tête!* I shall make a thousand men jealous."—"Nobody, sir," said Belisa, "has a right to be so; and you know that I have only friends now; but you, are not you afraid of disturbing some new conquest?" —"I never made but one in my life," replied the count; "she expects me in the country, and I shall go this spring to see her."—"She would be to be pitied if she were in town: you are so taken up here that she would run the risk of being neglected."—"She would amuse herself, madam, and think nothing of me."—"No more of this beating about the bush," resumed she. "Why do I see you so seldom, and for so short a time?"—"To let you enjoy at full liberty all the pleasures of your youth."—"You can never give me too much of your company, sir. My house is yours; look upon it as such; I shall be delighted. I request it, and I have acquired a right to exact it."—"No, madam, exact nothing; I should despair if I displeased you; but permit me not to see you again till the summer."

This obstinacy piqued her. "Go, sir," said she to him, with anger, "go, seek pleasures in which I have no part. I have merited your inconstancy." From that day she had not a moment's ease: she informed herself of all his proceedings; she sought and followed him with her eyes in the public walks and at the theatres. The women whom he saw became odious to her; she never ceased questioning his friends. The winter appeared intolerably long. Though it was but the beginning of March, as some fine days occurred, "I must," said she, "confound him, and justify myself. I have been wrong hitherto—he has that advantage over me; but to-morrow he shall have it no longer." She sent to request him to come to her. Everything was ready for their departure. The count

arrived. "Your hand," said Belisa, "to help me into my coach." —"Why, where are we going?" said he.—"To grow tired of ourselves in the country." The count was transported with joy at these words. Belisa, by the movement of the hand that supported her, perceived the ecstasy of emotion to which she herself had given birth. "Oh, my dear count!" said she to him, pressing that hand which trembled beneath hers, "what do I not owe you? You have taught me to love; you have convinced me that I am capable of it; and in clearing up my doubts with respect to my own sentiments, you have done me the most pleasing violence: you have forced me to think well of myself, and to believe myself worthy of you. My love is satisfied. I have no longer any SCRUPLE, and I am happy."

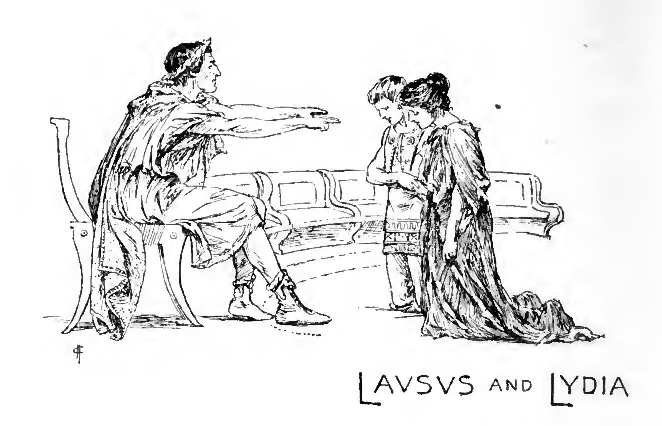
Notes to "THE SCRUPLE"

P. 21.—"*Distinct and exact notion.*"

There is in Marmontel, and it is one of his best points, a distinct capacity of laughing at himself and his own side. The authority of the "clear and precise idea" was a point of conscience with the eighteenth century, both as it derived from Descartes and as it derived from Locke.

P. 23.—"*Shock.*"

The name in the original is *Joujou.*



LAVSVS AND LYDIA

"Lausus Equûm Domitor, Debellatorque Ferarum."
—VIRG. *Æn.* vii.

THE character of Mezentius, King of Tyrrhenia, is well known. A bad prince and a good father, cruel and affectionate by turns, he had nothing of the tyrant, nothing that presaged violence, so long as his desires knew no obstacle. But the calm of this haughty soul was the repose of a lion.

Mezentius had a son named Lausus, whose valour and beauty rendered him famous among the young heroes of Italy. Lausus had attended Mezentius in the war against the King of Præneste. His father, at the very summit of joy, saw him, covered with blood, fighting and conquering by his side. The King of Præneste, driven out of his territories, and seeking safety in flight, had left in the hands of the conqueror a treasure more precious than his crown, a princess at that age wherein the heart has only the virtues of nature, and nature has all the charms of innocence and beauty. Everything, whether noble or affecting, that the Graces in tears display, was painted in Lydia's countenance. In her grief, courage, and dignity, one might discover a

daughter of kings amidst a crowd of slaves. She received the first attentions of her enemies without haughtiness, without gratitude, as an homage due to her rank, the noble sentiments of which were not weakened in her soul by ill-fortune.

She heard her father named, and at that name she lifted up to heaven her fine eyes filled with tears. All hearts were moved. Mezentius himself was embarrassed, and forgot his pride and his years. Prosperity, which hardens weak souls, softens prouds hearts, and nothing can be gentler than an hero after a victory.

If the savage heart of old Mezentius was not able to resist the charms of his captive, what was their impression on the virtuous soul of young Lausus! He mourned over his exploits; he reproached himself with his victory: it cost Lydia tears. "Let her avenge herself," said he; "let her hate me as much as I love her: I have but too well deserved it." But a still more distressful idea presented itself to his imagination: he saw Mezentius, astonished, softened, passing on a sudden from rage to clemency. He judged rightly that humanity alone had not effected this revolution; and the fear of having his father for a rival completed his confusion.

At the age of Mezentius, jealousy follows closely upon love. The tyrant observed the eyes of Lausus with an uneasy attention; he beheld that joy and ardour which had lighted up the face of the young hero on his first victory, extinguished in them all at once. He saw him disturbed; he caught some looks which it was but too easy to understand. From that instant he considered himself as betrayed; but nature interposed, and suspended his rage. A tyrant, even in his fury, constrains himself to think that he is just; and before he condemned his son, Mezentius laboured to convict him.

He began by dissembling his own passion with so much art that the prince looked on his former fears as vain, and considered the attentions of love as nothing more than the

effects of clemency. At first he affected to allow Lydia all the appearances of liberty; but the tyrant's court was full of spies and informers, the usual retinue of men of power, who, not being able to make themselves beloved, place their greatness in being feared.

His son no longer forbid himself to pay Lydia a respectful homage. He mingled with his sentiments an interest so delicate and tender, that Lydia very soon began to reproach herself for the hatred which she thought she entertained for the blood of her enemy, while Lausus lamented that he had contributed to Lydia's misfortunes. He called the gods to witness that he would do all in his power to repair them. "The king, my father," says he, "is as generous after victory as intractable before battle: satisfied with victory, he is incapable of oppression. It is easier than ever for the King of Præneste to engage him to a peace that shall be glorious to both. That peace will dry up your tears, beautiful Lydia; but will it efface the remembrance of the crime of those who caused you to shed them? Why did I not see all my blood flow rather than those tears!"

Lydia's replies, which were full of modesty and greatness of soul, allowed Lausus to see only a quiet gratitude, though at the bottom of her heart she was but too sensible of the care he took to console her. She sometimes blushed at having listened to him with complaisance; but her father's interests obliged her to avail herself of such a support.

In the meantime their conferences growing more frequent, became also more animated, more interesting, more intimate; and love made its way insensibly through respect and gratitude, as a flower which, that it may blow, opens the slight texture in which it is enfolded.

Deceived more and more by the feigned tranquillity of Mezentius, the credulous Lausus flattered himself that he should very soon see his duty accord with his inclination; and nothing in the world, in his opinion, was easier than to

reconcile them. The treaty of peace which he had meditated was reduced to two articles: to restore to the King of Præneste his crown and his territories, and to make his marriage with the princess the bond of union between the two powers. He communicated this project to Lydia. The reliance he placed on it, the advantages he saw accruing from it, the transports of joy with which the mere idea inspired him, surprised the lovely captive into a smile, mingled with tears. "Generous prince," said she to him, "may heaven fulfil the wishes you utter for my father! I shall not be sorry that I am made the pledge of peace and the token of gratitude." This touching reply was accompanied with a look still more touching. The tyrant was informed of all. His first transport would have hurried him to sacrifice his rival; but this son was the only support of his crown, the only barrier between the people and himself: the same stroke would have rendered him completely odious to his subjects, and have taken from him the only defender whom he could oppose to the public hatred. Fear is the ruling passion of tyrants, so Mezentius resolved to dissemble. He sent for his son, talked to him with good humour, and bade him prepare to set out next day for the frontiers of his territories, where he had left his army. The prince endeavoured to conceal the grief which wrung his soul, and set out without having time to take leave of Lydia.

The very day of Lausus' departure, Mezentius caused honourable conditions of peace to be proposed to the King of Præneste, the first article being his marriage with the daughter of the vanquished prince. That unfortunate monarch hesitated not to consent, and the same ambassador that offered him peace brought back his consent as an answer.

Lausus had in the court a friend who had been attached to him from his infancy. A remarkable resemblance to the young prince had been the means of making the fortune of this young man, who was called Phanor; but they resembled each other still more in their dispositions than in their faces.

They had the same tastes, the same virtues. Lausus and Phanor seemed to have but one soul. At parting, Lausus had confided his passion and his despair to Phanor. The latter was therefore inconsolable on hearing of the marriage of Lydia with Mezentius. He thought it his duty to acquaint the prince with it. The situation of the lover at this news cannot be described; his heart was troubled, his reason forsook him; and in the distraction of a blind sorrow he wrote to Lydia the warmest and most imprudent letter that love ever dictated. Phanor was charged with the delivery of it, at the hazard of his life, if he should be discovered. He was so. Mezentius, in his rage, ordered him to be loaded with irons, and dragged to a frightful prison.

However, everything was prepared for the celebration of this unhappy marriage. It will be easily imagined that the feast was suitable to the character of Mezentius. Wrestling, the cestus, gladiators, combats between men and animals bred up to carnage, everything that barbarity has invented as its amusements was to have graced the pomp: nothing was wanting to this bloody spectacle but persons to fight against the wild beasts. For it was customary to expose in these fights none but criminals condemned to die, and Mezentius, who on any suspicion was always eager to put the innocent to death, was still less in the habit of delaying the punishment of the guilty. There remained in the prisons none but the faithful friend of Lausus. "Let him be exposed," said Mezentius; "let him fall a prey to devouring lions. The traitor deserves a more cruel death; but this best suits his crime and my vengeance, and his punishment is a festival worthy of injured love."

When Lausus awaited in vain the answer of his friend, impatience gave way to affright. "Could we have been discovered!" says he; "can I have lost my friend by my fatal imprudence? Lydia herself. . . . Ah! I tremble. No, I cannot live any longer in this dreadful uncertainty." He

set out; he disguised himself carefully; he arrived: he heard the reports spread among the people; he learned that his friend was in chains, and that the next day was to unite Lydia with Mezentius; that the feast which is to precede the marriage festival was being prepared, and that by way of show at this festival, the unhappy Phanor was to be exhibited, a prey to wild beasts. He could not bear this recital; a deadly chill spread through all his veins. He recovered himself, but, lost in distraction, he fell on his knees and cried out, "Great Gods, restrain my hand; my despair terrifies me. Let me die to save my friend; but let me die with virtue!" Resolved to deliver his dear Phanor, though he should perish in his stead, he flew to the gates of the prison: but how was he to enter there? He addressed himself to the slave whose office it was to carry food to the prisoners. "Open your eyes," said he, "and know me: I am Lausus, I am the son of the king. I expect an important service from you. Phanor is confined here; I will see him: I must. I have but one way to come at him. Give me your clothes. Fly! here are pledges of my gratitude. Withdraw yourself from the vengeance of my father. If you betray me, you rush on your ruin; if you assist me in my undertaking, my favour shall find you in the very heart of the desert."

The weak and timorous slave yielded to his promises and threats. He assisted the prince in disguising himself, and disappeared, after having told him the hour at which he was to present himself, and the conduct he was to observe in order to deceive the vigilance of the guards. Night approached; the moment arrived. Lausus presented himself: he assumed the name of the slave. The bolts of the dungeon opened with a dismal sound. By the feeble glimmering of a torch, he penetrated into this mansion of horror; he advanced; he listened: the accents of a moaning voice struck his ear. He knew it to be the voice of his friend; he saw him lying down in a corner of the cell, covered with rags, consumed with weakness,

the paleness of death on his countenance, and the fire of despair in his eyes. "Leave me," said Phanor, taking him for the slave; "away with this odious nourishment: suffer me



"Leave me," said Phanor, taking him for the slave; "away with this odious nourishment: suffer me to die."

to die. Alas!" added he, sending forth cries interrupted by sighs, "alas! my dear Lausus is still more unhappy than I. O ye gods! if he knew the state to which he has reduced his

friend!"—"Yes," cried Lausus, throwing himself on his bosom, "yes, my dear Phanor, he does know it, and he partakes it."—"What do I see?" cried Phanor, transported. "Ah, Lausus! ah, my prince!"

At these words both of them lost the use of their senses; their arms were locked together, their hearts met, their sighs were intermingled. They remained for a long time mute and immovable, stretched out on the floor of the dungeon; grief stifled their voices, and they answered each other only by embracing more closely, and bathing one another with their tears. At last Lausus came to himself. "Let us not lose time," said he to his friend; "take these clothes, get hence, and leave me here."—"What, I, great gods! can I be so vile? Ah, Lausus, could you believe it? Ought you to propose it to me?"—"I know you well," said the prince; "but you should also know me. The sentence is pronounced, your punishment is prepared, you must die or fly."—"Fly!"—"Hear me; my father is violent, but he is not without feeling; nature asserts her right over his heart: if I deliver you from death, I have only to melt him to compassion for myself; and his hand, when lifted up against a son, will be easily disarmed." —"He would strike," said Phanor, "and your death would be my crime. I cannot abandon you."—"Well then," said Lausus, "remain here; but at your death you shall see mine also. Depend not on my father's clemency; it would be in vain for him to pardon me; think not that I should pardon myself. This hand, which wrote the fatal billet that condemns you, this hand, which, even after its crime, is still the hand of your friend, shall reunite us in your own despite." In vain would Phanor have insisted. "Let us argue no longer," interrupted Lausus; "you can say nothing to me that can outweigh the shame of surviving my friend, after I have destroyed him. Your pressing earnestness makes me blush, and your prayers are an affront. I will answer for my own safety, if you will fly: I swear to die, if

you will stay and perish. Choose: the moments now are precious."

Phanor knew his friend too well to pretend to shake his resolution. "I consent," says he, "to let you try the only means of safety that is left us; but live, if you would have me live: your scaffold shall be mine."—"I readily believe it," said Lausus, "and your friend esteems you too much to desire you to survive him." At these words they embraced, and Phanor went out of the dungeon in the slave's dress, which Lausus had just thrown off.

What a night! what a dreadful night for Lydia! Alas! how shall we paint the emotions that arose in her soul, that divided, that tore it, between love and virtue? She adored Lausus, she detested Mezentius, she sacrificed herself to her father's interests, she delivered herself up to the object of her hatred, she tore herself for ever from the wishes of an adored lover. They should drag her to the altar as it were to punishment. Barbarous Mezentius! thou art content to reign over the heart by violence and fear; it suffices thee that thy consort trembles before thee, as a slave before his master. Such is love in the heart of a tyrant.

Yet, alas! it is for him alone that she is hereafter to live: it is to him that she is going to be united. If she resists, she must betray her lover and her father: a refusal would discover the secret of her soul; and if Lausus is suspected to be dear to her, he is undone.

It was in this cruel agitation that Lydia awaited the dawn. The terrible dawn arrives. Lydia, dismayed and trembling, sees herself decked out, not as a bride to be presented at the altars of Love and Hymen, but as one of those innocent victims which a barbarous piety crowns with flowers before it sacrifices them.

They lead her to the place where the spectacle is to be exhibited; the people assemble there in multitudes; the sports begin. I shall not stop to describe the matches

with the cestus, at wrestling, with the sword; a more dreadful object engages our attention.

An enormous lion advances. At first, with tranquil pride, he traverses the arena, throwing his dreadful looks round the amphitheatre that environs him: a confused murmur announces the terror that he inspires. In a short time the sound of the clarions animates him; he replies by roaring; his shaggy mane is erected around his monstrous head; he lashes his loins with his tail, and fire begins to shoot from his sparkling eyeballs. The affrighted populace wish and dread to see the wretch appear, who is to be delivered up to the rage of this monster. Terror and pity seize on every breast.

The combatant, whom Mezentius's guards themselves had taken for Phanor, presents himself. Lydia could not recognise him. The horror which seized her had obliged her to turn away her eyes from this spectacle, so shocking to the feelings of her tender soul. Alas! what would she feel, if she knew that Phanor, that the dear friend of Lausus, is the devoted criminal; if she knew that Lausus himself had taken his friend's place, and that it is he that is about to fight?

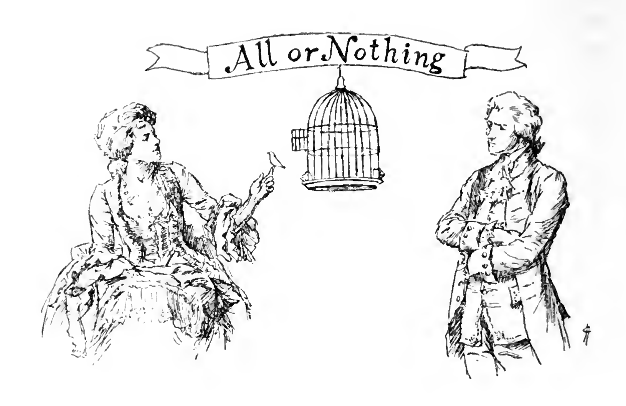
Half naked, his hair dishevelled, he walks with an intrepid step: a poniard for the attack, a buckler for defence, are the only arms by which he is protected. Mezentius, in his error, sees in him only the guilty Phanor. His own blood is dumb, Nature is blind; it is his own son whom he delivers up to death, and his bowels are not moved; resentment and revenge stifle every other sentiment. With a barbarous joy he sees the fury of the lion rising by degrees. Lausus, impatient, provokes the monster, and urges him to the combat. He advances towards him; the lion springs forward. Lausus avoids him. Thrice the enraged animal makes towards him with his foaming jaws, and thrice Lausus escapes his murderous fangs.

In the meantime Phanor learns what is doing. He runs up, and bursts through the multitude before him, while his piercing cries make the amphitheatre resound. "Stop, Mezentius! save your son: it is he; it is Lausus that is engaged." Mezentius looks and knows Phanor, who hastens towards him: "O ye gods! what do I see? My people, assist me; throw yourselves into the arena; ravish my son from the jaws of death." At the name of Lausus, Lydia falls senseless on the steps of the amphitheatre; her heart is frozen, her eyes are covered with darkness. Mezentius sees nothing but his son, now in inevitable danger: a thousand hands arm in vain for his defence; the monster pursues him, and would have devoured him, before they could have come to his assistance. But, oh! incredible wonder! oh unlooked-for happiness! Lausus, while he eludes the bounds of the furious animal, strikes him a mortal blow, and the sword, with which he is armed, is drawn reeking from the lion's heart. He falls, and swims in seas of blood, vomited through his foaming jaws. The universal alarm now changes into triumph, and the people reply to Mezentius's doleful cries only by shouts of admiration and joy.

These shouts recalled Lydia to life; she opened her eyes, and saw Lausus at Mezentius's feet, holding in one hand the bloody dagger, and by the other his dear and faithful Phanor. "It is I," said he to his father, "it is I alone who am culpable. Phanor's crime was mine: it was my duty to expiate it. I forced him to resign his place, and would have killed myself, if he had refused. I live; I owe that life to him; and if your son be still dear to you, to him you owe your son: but if your vengeance is not appeased, our days are in your hands. Strike; we will perish together; our hearts have sworn it." Lydia, trembling at this discourse, viewed Mezentius with suppliant eyes, overflowing with tears.

The tyrant's cruelty could not withstand this trial. The cries of nature and the voice of remorse put jealousy and

revenge to silence. He remained for a long time immovable, and dumb, rolling by turns, on the objects that surround him, eyes of trouble and confusion, in which love and hate, indignation and pity, combat and succeed each other. All tremble around the tyrant. Lausus, Phanor, Lydia, an innumerable multitude, await with terror the first words that he may pronounce. He submits at last, in spite of himself, to that virtue whose ascendency overpowers him; and passing of a sudden, with impetuous violence, from rage to tenderness, he throws himself into his son's arms. "Yes," says he, "I pardon thee, and I pardon also thy friend. Live, love one another: but there remains one sacrifice more for me to make thee, and thou hast just now rendered thyself worthy of it. Receive it then," said he with a new effort. "receive this hand, the gift of which is dearer to thee than life: it is thy valour which has forced it from me: and that alone could have obtained it."



AT that time of life, when it is so agreeable to be a widow, Cecilia was continually thinking of a fresh engagement. Two rivals disputed her choice. One, modest and plain, loved only her; the other, artful and vain, was above all things fond of himself. The first had the confidence of Cecilia; the second had her love. Cecilia was unjust, you will say: not at all. Plain folks neglect themselves; they think, that in order to please, it is sufficient to love with sincerity, and to convince others of their love. But there are few dispositions which do not require a little setting off. A man without art in the midst of the world is like a lady at the opera without *rouge*.

Erastus, with his usual frankness, had said to Cecilia, "I love you;" and from that time he had loved her just as he had breathed; his love was his life. Floricourt had rendered himself agreeable by those little gallantries which have the air of pretending to nothing. Among the attentions which he paid to Cecilia, he chose, not the most passionate, but the most seductive. He was never affected, never grave: she thought him all the more amiable, because he seemed to have no ulterior intentions. She pitied Erastus: she did not know a better fellow: it was a pity that it was impossible to love

him. She dreaded Floricourt: he was a dangerous creature, and would perhaps be the ruin of a woman; but how was it possible to defend one's self? However, she would not deceive Erastus. She must confess the whole to him.

"I esteem you, Erastus," said Cecilia to him, "and I am sensible you merit something better. But the heart has its caprices; my own dissents from my reason."—"I understand you, madam," replied Erastus, maintaining his self-possession, but with tears in his eyes; "your reason pleads for me, but your heart for another."—"I confess it, and not without regret: I should be to blame, if I were free; but there is no answering for inclination."—"Very well, madam; then I will love alone: I shall derive the more glory from it."—"But this is the very thing I would not have."—"Nor I neither; but that is to no purpose."—"And what is to become of you?"—"Whatever Love and Nature please."—"You distress me, Erastus, by thus abandoning yourself."—"I must abandon myself, when I cannot help it."—"How unhappy am I in having ever known you!"—"Indeed, you had need complain: it is a terrible misfortune to be beloved!"—"Yes, it is a misfortune to have to reproach one's self with the unhappiness of a man we esteem."—"You, madam! you have nothing to reproach yourself with. A man of honour may complain of a coquette who trifles with him; or rather she is unworthy of his complaints and regret; but what wrong have you committed? Have you employed any seducing arts to attract me, any complaisance to retain me? Did I consult you about loving you? Who obliges you to think me amiable? Follow your own inclination, and I will follow mine. Be not afraid that I shall plague you."—"No, but you will plague yourself; for, after all, you will see me."—"What! would you be cruel enough to forbid me your sight?"—"I have no such intention: but I wish to see you easy, and as my best friend."—"Friend, let it be: the name signifies nothing."—"But the name is not enough; I would bring

you back in reality to that sentiment which is so pure, so tender, and so solid, to the friendship which I feel for you." —"Well, madam, you may like me as you please; but pray permit me to love you as I can, and as much as I can. I only desire the liberty of being unhappy after my own fashion."

The obstinacy of Erastus grieved Cecilia; but, after all, she had done her duty: so much the worse for him if he loved her still. She gave herself up, therefore, without concern, or reproach, to her inclination for Floricourt. The most refined gallantry was put in practice to captivate her. Floricourt succeeded without difficulty. He had pleased her, he thought he loved her, and he might have been happy, if he had chosen to be so. But self-love is the bane of love. It was but a trifle in Floricourt's eyes to be loved more than everything else: he wanted to be loved solely, without reserve, or participation. It is true that he set the example: he had detached himself for Cecilia's sake from a prude whom he had ruined, and a coquette who was ruining him; he had broken off with five or six of the vainest and foolishest young fellows who had up to that time been seen in the world. He supped nowhere but at Cecilia's, where it was delicious supping; and he had the goodness to think of her amidst a circle of women, not one of whom equalled her either in grace or beauty. Did not such uncommon behaviour, not to speak of merit still more uncommon, demand from Cecilia the most absolute devotion?

In the meantime, as he was not sufficiently in love to be at all deficient in address, he took care not to suffer his pretensions to appear at first. Never had man, before conquest, been more complaisant, more docile, less assuming, than Floricourt; but from the moment he saw himself master of her heart, he became its tyrant. Hard to please, imperious, jealous, he would fain monopolise all the faculties of Cecilia's soul. He could not so much as permit her one

idea except his own, much less a thought which came not from him. A decided taste, a continuous acquaintanceship, was sure to displease him; but his meaning was to be guessed at. He would force her to ask him twenty times over what he was thinking of, or what had put him out of humour; and it was never but as a favour that he confessed at last that such a thing had displeased him, that such a person gave him the spleen. In short, as soon as he saw that his will was law, he declared it without ceremony, and it was submitted to without opposition. It was but a small matter to require of Cecilia the sacrifice of those pleasures which naturally presented themselves; he usually suggested them, on purpose to see them sacrificed to him. He would speak approvingly of a play or an entertainment; he would invite Cecilia to it; and they would settle the party with ladies of his own naming. When the hour came, they were dressed, the horses put to; he would change his design, and Cecilia was obliged to pretend a headache. Or he would present to her a she-friend, whom he introduced as an adorable woman: she was found such: an intimacy was contracted. A week after, he confessed he had been deceived; she was affected, insipid, or giddy; and Cecilia was obliged to break off with her.

Cecilia was soon reduced to slight acquaintances, whom, however, he complained that she saw too often. She perceived not that her complaisance was changing into slavery. We think we pursue our own will when we pursue the will of those we love. Floricourt seemed to her only to forestall her own desires. She sacrificed everything to him, without so much as suspecting that she made him any sacrifices; yet Floricourt's self-love was not satisfied.

Town society, perfectly frivolous and transitory as it was, yet appeared to him too interesting. He extolled solitude, he repeated a hundred times that there was no true love but in the country, far from dissipation and noise, and that he should

never be happy but in a retreat inaccessible to impertinents and rivals. Cecilia had a country-house to his heart's content. She would have been charmed to pass the finest part of the year there with him; but could she do it with decency? He gave her to understand, that it was sufficient to break the *tête-à-tête* by taking two friends with them, and he selected Erastus and Artenice. After all, if people should talk, their marriage, which was soon to be concluded, would silence them. They set out; Erastus was of the party, and this again was a refinement of Floricourt's self-love. He knew that Erastus was his rival, his unsuccessful rival: he was the most flattering witness that he could have of his triumph; therefore he had taken much pains with him. His attentions had an air of compassion and superiority, at which Erastus was sometimes quite out of patience: but the tender and delicate friendship of Cecilia made him amends for these humiliations, and the fear of displeasing her induced him to disguise them. However, sure as he was that they were going into the country only in order to enjoy their love there at liberty, how could he bring himself to follow them? This reflection Cecilia made, as well as he: she would have hindered him, but the party was settled, past revocation. Besides, Artenice was young and handsome. Solitude, opportunity, liberty, example, jealousy, and pique might induce Erastus to turn towards her those vows to which Cecilia could not listen. Cecilia was modest enough to think it possible for a person to be unfaithful to her, and just enough to wish it: but to do so showed a very slight knowledge of the heart and character of Erastus.

Artenice was one of those women with whom love is only an arrangement of society, who are offended at a long attachment, who grow tired of a constant passion, and who depend sufficiently on men's sense of honour to capitulate to them without reserve, and to jilt them without hesitation. They had told her, "We are going to pass some time in

the country: Erastus is to be there: will you make one?" She had replied with a smile, "With all my heart; a pleasant scheme;" and the party was immediately settled. This was an additional torment to Erastus. Artenice had heard Cecilia praise her friend as the most sensible, the most honourable, and the most reserved man in the world. "That is charming," said Artenice within herself; "this is the kind of man to be taken and dismissed without precaution or noise. Happy or unhappy, they never blab: one is never at one's ease but with people of this sort. An Erastus is a rarity." We may readily conclude, from these reflections, that Erastus did not want for encouragement.

Floricourt behaved towards Cecilia with an assiduity perfectly distressing to an unsuccessful rival. Cecilia in vain endeavoured to put constraint on herself; her looks, her voice, her very silence betrayed her. Erastus was upon the rack; but he concealed his pain. Artenice, like a dexterous woman, kept conveniently at a distance, and induced Erastus to follow her. "How happy are they!" said she one day to him as they were walking together. "Wholly wrapped up in each other, they feel mutual satisfaction, and live only for themselves. It is a great happiness to love. Do you not think so?"—"Yes, madam," replied Erastus, looking down; "it is a great happiness when it is mutual. . . ."—"Oh, it is always mutual: for I do not see that one is alone in the world."—"I mean, madam, when two hearts are equally affectionate, and made to love one another equally."—"Equally! that is very unreasonable. For my part, I think that we ought to be less difficult, and to content ourselves with an approach to it. Suppose I have more sensibility in my temper than he who attaches himself to me, must I punish him for it? Every one gives what he has, and we have no reason to reproach one who contributes towards society that portion of sensibility which nature has given him. I wonder why

the coldest hearts are always the most delicate. You, for example, you are a man who would expect one to love him to distraction." — "I, madam! I expect nothing." — "You mistake me; that is not what I mean. You have enough in you to attract a woman, to be sure. I should not even be surprised at her conceiving an inclination for you." — "That may be, madam: in point of folly, I will take my oath of nothing: but if a woman were so foolish as to fall in love with me, I think she would be much to be pitied."—"Is this a caution, sir, that you are so good as to give me?" —"You, madam? I flatter myself that you think me neither foolish nor weak enough to give you any such caution."— "Very well, you speak in general then, and except me out of politeness?"—"The exception itself is unnecessary, madam; for you have nothing to do with the case."—"Pardon me, sir: I tell you that you have qualities enough to please, and that one might very easily love you to distraction; and you reply, that any one who loved you would be very much to be pitied. Nothing, in my opinion, can be more personal. Ah! you are embarrassed?"—"I confess that your raillery embarrasses me; I know not how to reply to it; but it is not generous to attack me with weapons which I cannot wield."—"But if I were in earnest, Erastus: if nothing in the world were truer?"—"I throw up the cards, madam: the situation I am now reduced to will not permit me to amuse you any longer."—"Ah! upon my word he is in downright earnest," said she, following him with her eyes. "The tone of levity, the laughing air which I assumed, piqued him. He is a man for sentiment: I must talk to him in his own language. To-morrow, in this grove, one turn more, and my victory is decided."

Erastus's walk with Artenice had appeared long to Cecilia. He returned from it quite pensive, and she in triumph. "Well," said Cecilia to her friend, in a very low voice, "what do you think of Erastus?"—"Why, I like him

pretty well; he has not bored me at all, and that is a great deal; he has some excellent qualities, and one might make an agreeable man of him. Only I find him a little romantic in his manner. He expects sentiment: a fault of habit, a mere country prejudice, of which it is easy to break him." —"*He expects sentiment!*" said Cecilia within herself; "they are coming to terms already! This is going very far at one interview. Erastus seems to accept the situation pretty cheerfully. But then! if he is happy, am I to take it ill? Yet it was wrong in him to try to persuade me that he was so greatly to be pitied. He might have spared my delicacy the heavy reproaches, which he knew very well I was bestowing upon myself. It is a trick of lovers always to exaggerate their pains. In short, he is consoled, and it is a great comfort to me."

Cecilia, under this idea, put less restraint on herself with regard to Floricourt. Erastus, whom nothing escaped, became more melancholy than usual. Cecilia and Artenice attributed his melancholy to the same cause. A growing passion always produces that effect. The day after, Artenice did not fail to contrive a *tête-à-tête* for Cecilia and Floricourt, by taking away Erastus along with her.

"You are angry," said she; "and I want to be reconciled to you. I see, Erastus, that you are not one of those men with whom love is to be treated as a jest: you look upon an affair as one of the most serious things in the world; I like you the better for it."—"I! Not at all, madam, I am too well persuaded that a serious passion is the highest extravagance, and that love is no longer a pleasure than while it is a jest." —"Be consistent then. Yesterday evening you required an equal sensibility, a mutual inclination."—"I required an impossibility, or, at least, the most uncommon thing in the world: and I maintain, that without this union, which is so difficult that it must be given up, the wisest and surest way is to make a jest of love, without annexing any chimerical

value or importance to it."—"Upon my word, my dear Erastus, you talk like an angel. Why indeed should we torment ourselves to no purpose, by endeavouring to love more than we are able? We suit each other, we arrange matters, we grow weary, and we part. On casting up the account, we have had our pleasure; the time, therefore, was well employed, and would to heaven we could amuse ourselves so all our lives!"—"A very convenient way of thinking!" said Erastus to himself.

"I well know," continued she, "what they call a serious passion: nothing is more gloomy, nothing more dull. Uneasiness, jealousy, are continually tormenting the two unhappy creatures. They pretend to be satisfied with each other, and weary themselves to death."—"Ah! madam, what is it you are saying? They want nothing, if they love truly. Such an union is the charm of life, the delight of the soul, the fulness of happiness."—"Really, sir, you are mad with your eternal inconsistencies. What do you want, pray?"—"What is not to be found, madam, and what perhaps will never be seen."—"A fine expectation truly! And in the meanwhile your heart will continue disengaged?"—"Alas! would to heaven it could!"—"It is not so then, Erastus?"—"No, certainly, madam, and you would pity its condition, could you but conceive it." At these words he left her, lifting his eyes towards heaven, and heaving a profound sigh. "This then," said Artenice, "is what they call a reserved man! He is so much so, that it makes him simply silly. By good luck, I did not explain myself. Possibly I ought to have spoken out: bashful people must be assisted. But he walks off with an exclamation, without giving one time to ask him what possesses or afflicts him. We shall see: he must declare himself; for, in fact, I have let myself in, and my honour is at stake."

Floricourt, during supper, tried to entertain himself at the expense of Erastus. "So!" said he to Artenice, "where have

you been? Nothing should be concealed from friends, and we set you the example."—"Much good that is," said Artenice, in a tone of vexation. "Do we know how to profit by the examples that are set us? Do we even know what we would be at? If one talks of a serious passion, this gentleman treats it as a jest; if one agrees to its being a jest, he goes back again to the serious."—"It is easy for you, madam," said Erastus, "to turn me into ridicule: I submit to it, as much as you please."—"Nay, sir! I have no such design; but we are among friends, let us explain. We have not time to observe and guess at each other. I please you; that you have given me to understand: I do not dissemble that you are agreeable enough to me. We have not come here to be idle spectators; honour itself requires that we should be employed: let us make an end of it, and understand one another. How is it that you would love me? How would you have me love you?"—"I, madam!" cried Erastus: "I don't want you to love me."—"What, sir, have you deceived me then?"—"Not at all, madam; I call Heaven to witness that I have not said one word to you in the least like love."—"Nay then," said she, getting up from table, "this is a piece of effrontery beyond anything I ever saw." Floricourt would have detained her. "No, sir, I cannot bear the sight of a man who has the assurance to deny the dull and mawkish declarations with which he has pestered me, and which I had the goodness to put up with, prepossessed by the commendations that had been given me, I know not why, of the sulky creature."

"Artenice has gone off in a rage," said Cecilia to Erastus, when she met him next day: "what has passed between you?"—"Idle talk, madam, with the result that I, for my part, saw that nothing is more formidable than a serious passion, and nothing more despicable than a frivolous one. Artenice saw me sigh; she thought I sighed for her, and I undeceived her: that is all."—"You undeceived her! That was like a

gentleman; but you should have done it a little more soothingly!"—"How, madam! she dared to tell you that we were on the brink of love, and you would have me contain myself? What would you have thought of my assent, or even of my silence?"—"I should have thought you quite right and reasonable. Artenice is still young and handsome, and your attachment, even had it been merely an amusement . . ."—"I am not in a humour to amuse myself, madam, and I beg of you to spare me advice by which I shall never profit."—"But you are now alone with us, and you yourself must perceive that you will cut a very queer figure here."—"I shall act, madam, the part of a friend: nothing is, in my opinion, more honourable."—"But, Erastus, how will you be able to bear it?"—"Leave that to me, madam, and do not make yourself at all uneasy on my account."—"I can't help being uneasy; for, after all, I know your situation, and it is dreadful."—"It may be so; but it is neither in your power nor in mine to make it better: let me alone, and let us talk no more of it."—"Talk no more of it! That is easily said; but you are unhappy, and I am the cause."—"Oh no, madam, no; I have told you so an hundred times; you have nothing to reproach yourself with. In God's name be easy."—"I should be easy, if you could but be so."—"Nay, now you are cruel. Though you should insist upon knowing what passes in my soul, yet I should not feel one pang the less, but you would have some chagrin the more for it: so pray forget that I love you."—"How! forget it? I see it every moment."—"You would have me leave you then?"—"Why, our position would require it."—"Very well: give me my dismissal: that is soon done."—"I dismiss you, my friend! It is for you that I am in pain."—"Well, then, for my part, I declare to you that I cannot live without you."—"You think so: but absence . . ."—"Absence! a fine remedy for love like mine!"—"Doubt not its efficacy, my dear Erastus: there are women more amiable and less unjust than I."—"I am glad of it; but that

is all one to me."—"You think so at present."—"I am now what I shall be all my life long: I know myself: I know women. Do not be afraid that any of them can make me either happy or unhappy."—"I believe you would not form any attachment at first; but the world would afford good distractions."—"And with what? Nothing in it amuses me. Here at least I have no time to be dull: I see you, or I shall see you soon; you talk to me kindly; I am sure that you do not forget me; and if I were at a distance from you, I have an imagination that would be my torment."—"And could it paint anything more cruel than what you see?—"I see nothing, madam: I desire to see nothing: spare me the uneasiness of being your confidant."—"Indeed I admire your moderation."—"Yes, I have great merit, indeed, in being moderate! Would you have me beat you?"—"No; but people usually complain on such occasions."—"And of what?" —"I do not know; but I cannot reconcile so much love with so much reason."—"Be assured, madam, every one loves after his own fashion; mine is not to rave. If bad language would please you, I could bestow as much as another; but I doubt whether that would succeed."—"I lose nothing by that, Erastus; and at the bottom of your heart . . ."—"No, I vow my heart respects you as much as my mouth. I never can get myself for one moment into the least anger against you." —"Yet you torment yourself, I see plainly. Melancholy gains upon you."—"I am not very gay."—"You hardly eat."—"One can live on less."—"I am sure you do not sleep at all."—"Pardon me, I sleep a little, and that is the happiest part of my time; for I see you in my slumbers almost such as I wish you to be."—"Erastus!"—"Cecilia?"—"You offend me."—"Nay, madam! it is too much to want to rob me of my dreams. You are, in reality, what you please: suffer me then (at least in idea) to have you such as pleases me."—"Do not be angry, but let us talk reason. These very dreams which I ought not to know of, nourish your passion."—"So much the

better, madam, so much the better: I should be very sorry to be cured of it."—"And why do you persist in loving me without hope?"—"Without hope! I am not reduced to that yet: if your sentiments were just, they would be durable. But . . ."—"Do not flatter yourself, Erastus; I am in love, and for my whole life."—I do not flatter myself, Cecilia; it is you who slander yourself. Your passion is a fever, which will have its period. It is not generous to speak ill of one's rival: I am silent; but I refer it to the goodness of your disposition, to the delicacy of your heart."—"They are both blind."—"That amounts to owning that they are not so. One must have seen or have had some glimmerings, even to know that one sees badly."—"Well, I confess it; I remember to have discovered faults in Floricourt; but I cannot see them in him any longer."—"The knowledge will come to you, madam, and on this I depend."—"And if I marry Floricourt, as indeed everything tends that way . . ."—"In that case I shall have nothing more either to hope or to fear, and my resolution is already taken."—"And what is it?"—"To cease loving you."—"And how are you to do that?"—"How? nothing so easy. If I were in the army, and a ball . . ."—"O heavens!"—"Is it so difficult then to suppose one's self in the army?"—"Ah, cruel friend, what are you saying? and with what levity do you tell me of a mischief for which I should never forgive myself!"

Cecilia began to melt at this idea, when Floricourt came up. Erastus soon left them, according to his usual practice. "Our friend, my dear Cecilia," said Floricourt, "is a very tiresome mortal; don't you think so?"—"He is a man of honour," replied Cecilia, "whose virtues I respect."—"Faith, with all his virtues I wish he would go and indulge his reveries somewhere else: we want gaiety and company in the country."—"Perhaps he has some reason to be pensive and solitary.'—"Yes, I believe so, and I guess it. You blush, Cecilia! I shall be discreet, and your embarrassment imposes silence

on me."—"And why should I be embarrassed, sir? You believe that Erastus loves me, and you have reason to believe it. I pity him, I advise him, I talk to him as his friend; there is nothing in all this to blush at."—"Such a confession, my beautiful Cecilia, renders you still more deserving of esteem; but allow that it comes a little late."—"I did not think myself obliged, sir, to inform you of a secret which was not mine, and I should have concealed it from you all my life long, if you had not surprised me into the discovery. There is about such confidences an ostentation and cruelty not in my disposition. We should at least respect those whom we have made unhappy."

"There is heroism for you," cried Floricourt, in a tone of anger and irony. "And does this friend whom you use so well know how far matters are gone between us?"—"Yes, sir, I have told him all."—"And he has still the goodness to stay here!"—"I suggested to him to leave us."—"Ah! I have nothing more to say; I should have been surprised if your delicacy had not forerun mine. You perceived the indecency of suffering a man who loves you to continue in your house, at the very moment at which you are going to declare for his rival. There would even be inhumanity in making him a witness while you sacrifice him to me. When is he to depart?"—"I do not know; I have not had the courage to prescribe the time; and he has not the resolution to determine upon it."—"You are joking, Cecilia; who then is to propose to him to rid us of his presence? It would not be decent for me to do it."—"It shall be myself, sir; do not be uneasy."—"And what uneasiness do I show, madam? Would you do me the honour of supposing me to be jealous? I assure you I am not in the least so: my delicacy has yourself only in view, and for the little pain it may give you . . ."—"It will give me pain, no doubt, to deprive an estimable friend of the only consolation that is left him; but I know how to do myself violence."—"Violence, madam! that is rather strong. I would have

no violence; that would be the way to make me odious, so I will go myself, and persuade this estimable friend not to abandon you."—"Go on, sir; your raillery is mighty well timed, and I deserve, indeed, that you should talk to me in this manner."—"I am very unhappy, madam, to have displeased you," said Floricourt, on seeing her eyes bedewed with tears. "Forgive me my imprudence. I did not know all the concern you had for my rival and your friend." At these words he left her, overcome with grief.

Erastus, at his return, found her in this situation. "What is the matter, madam?" said he, accosting her: "bathed in tears!"—"You see, sir, the most wretched of women: I am sensible that my weakness will ruin me, and yet am unable to cure myself. A man, to whom I have sacrificed everything, doubts my sentiments, treats me with contempt, and suspects me."—"I understand, madam; he is jealous, and must be made easy. Your peace is concerned in it, and there is nothing that I would not sacrifice to a matter so dear to me. Adieu: may you be happy! and then I shall be less wretched." Cecilia's tears burst forth afresh at these words. "I have exhorted you to fly me," said she; "I advised you to it as a friend, and for your own sake. The effort I made over my own soul had nothing humiliating in it; but to banish you to gratify an unreasonable man, to rid him of a suspicion which I ought never to have been made to fear; to be obliged to justify my love by the sacrifice of friendship, is shameful and overwhelming. Never did anything cost me so dear before."—"It must be so, madam, if you love Floricourt."—"Yes, my dear Erastus, pity me: I do love him, and it is in vain I reproach myself for it." Erastus listened no longer, but took his leave.

Floricourt made use of every method to appease Cecilia; his gentleness, his complaisance, were not be equalled, when his will was fulfilled. Erastus was almost forgot; and what do we not forget for the person we love, when we have the

happiness to believe ourselves beloved again! One only amusement, alas! and that a very innocent one, yet remained to Cecilia in their solitude. She had brought up a canary, which answered her caresses with wonderful instinct. He knew her voice, and would fly to meet her. He never sung but when he saw her, he never ate but out of her hand, nor drank but out of her mouth: she would give him his liberty, he would use it but for a minute, and as soon as she called him, he flew to her immediately. No sooner was he placed on her bosom, than sensibility seemed to agitate his wings, and to precipitate the warblings of his melodious throat. Will any one believe that the haughty Floricourt was offended at the attention which Cecilia paid to the sensibility and sportiveness of this little animal?—"I will know," said he to himself one day, "whether the love she entertains for me is superior to these weaknesses. It would be a pretty thing indeed, if she should be more attached to her canary than to her lover. Yet it may be so; I will make the experiment, and that before the evening be over."

"And where is the little bird?" said he, accosting her with a smile.—"He is enjoying the open air and liberty; he is somewhere fluttering in the garden."—"And are you not afraid that at last he should accustom himself to that, and never return more?"—"I would forgive him, if he found himself happier."—"Ah! prithee now let us see if he be faithful to you. Will you please to recall him?" Cecilia made the usual signal, and the bird flew to her hand.—"He is charming," says Floricourt; "but he is too dear to you; I am jealous of him, and I would have *all or nothing* from the person I love." With these words he attempted to lay hold of the precious bird, in order to wring its neck; she set up a cry, the bird flew away; Cecilia, affrighted, grew pale, and fainted.

The servants ran to her assistance, and recalled her to life.

As soon as she opened her eyes, she saw at her feet, not the man whom she loved best, but the most odious of mortals to her. "Begone, sir," said she to him, with horror. "This last



"He is charming," says Floricourt; "but he is too dear to you; I am jealous of him, and I would have all or nothing *from the person I love."*

stroke has given me a clear insight into your frightful character, in which I see equal meanness and cruelty. Out of my house! never to enter it more! It is lucky for you that I still

respect myself more than I despise you. Oh, dear and worthy Erastus! to what a man should I have sacrificed you!" Floricourt went out, fuming with rage and shame; the bird returned to caress his beautiful mistress; and it is unnecessary to add, that Erastus found himself recalled.



CLARISSA had for some years heard of nothing but philosophers. "What kind of mortals are they?" said she: "I should so like to see one." She was warned that true philosophers were very rare, and not much addicted to making themselves cheap: but that in every other point, they were of all men the plainest, without the least singularity. "There are two sorts then," said she, "for in all the accounts that I hear, a philosopher is a fantastical being, who pretends to be like nobody else." Of those, they told her, there were enough everywhere: "You shall have as many as you please of them: nothing is easier."

Clarissa was in the country with an idle party, who sought only to amuse themselves. She was introduced, a few days after, to the sententious Aristus. "So you are a philosopher, sir?" said she, on seeing him. "Yes, madam," replied Aristus. —"This philosophy is a fine thing, is it not?"—"Why, madam, it is the knowledge of good and evil, or, if you please, wisdom."—"Is that all?" said Doris.—"And the fruit of this

wisdom," continued Clarissa, "is happiness, no doubt?"—"Add, madam, the making others happy."—"I should be a philosopher too, then," said the naïve Lucinda, in a low voice: "for I have been told a hundred times, that it depended only on me to be happy by making others happy."—"Well, who doesn't know that?" said Doris again. "It is a mere stage-secret."

Aristus, with a smile of contempt, gave them to understand that philosophical happiness was not that which a pretty woman can taste and make others taste.—"I rather suspected it," said Clarissa: "and no two things are more unlike, I should think, than a fine woman and a philosopher; but let us hear first how the sage Aristus sets about being happy himself."—"That is very simple, madam: I have no prejudices, I depend on nobody, I live on little, I love nothing, and I say everything that I think."—"To love nothing," observed Cleon, "seems to me a disposition but little favourable to making people happy."—"How, sir!" replied the philosopher; "what, do we do good only to what we love? Do you love the miserable wretch whom you relieve as you go by? It is just so that we distribute to mankind the assistance of our enlightenment."—"And is it with your enlightenment then," said Doris, "that you make people happy?"—"Yes, madam, and that we are so ourselves." The fat Lady President of Ponval thought this happiness very slender! "Has a philosopher," demanded Lucinda, "many pleasures?"—"He has but one, madam, that of despising them all."—"That must be very entertaining," said Mrs. President sharply. "And if you love nothing, sir, what do you do with your soul?"

"What do I do with it? I employ it in the only use worthy of it. I contemplate, I observe the wonders of Nature."—"Ay, but what interest can Nature have for you," replied Clarissa, "if mankind, if your fellow-creatures have nothing in them to attach you?"—"My fellow-creatures, madam! I will not dispute about words: but this expression is a little too strong.

However that may be, Nature, whom I study, has to me the attraction of curiosity, which is the spring of understanding, as that which is called desire is the motor of sentiment."—"Oh, ay, I can conceive," said Doris, "that curiosity is something; but do you reckon desire, sir, as nothing?"—"Desire, I have already told you, is an attraction of another sort."—"Why, then, give yourself up to one of these attractions, while you resist the other?"—"Ah! madam, because the enjoyments of the understanding are not mingled with any bitterness, and all those of the senses contain a concealed poison."—"But at least," said Cleon, "you have senses?"—"Yes, I have senses, if you please; but they have no dominion over me: my mind receives their impressions as glass, and nothing but the pure objects of the understanding can affect it strongly."—"A very insipid fellow this!" said Doris to Clarissa, in a very low voice; "who brought this strange creature here?"—"Peace," replied Clarissa; "he will do for the country: we can divert ourselves with him."

Cleon, who wanted to develop the character of Aristus still more, testified his surprise at seeing him resolved to love nothing: "For, after all," said he, "do you know nothing that is amiable?"—"I know some things that are superficially so," replied the philosopher; "but I know how to distrust what is beneath."—"It has to be shown," said Cleon, "whether this mistrust be well founded."—"Oh, very well founded, I assure you; I have seen enough to convince me that this globe is peopled only by fools, knaves, and ingrates."—"If you were to consider it well," said Clarissa to him in a tone of reproach, "you would be less unjust, and perhaps also more happy."

The sage, confounded for a moment, pretended not to have heard. Dinner was announced; he gave his hand to Clarissa, and seated himself next her at table. "I would fain," said she to him, "reconcile you to human nature."—"Impossible, madam! impossible: man is the most vicious

of beings. What can be more cruel, for example, than the spectacle of your dinner? How many innocent animals are sacrificed to the voraciousness of man? The ox, what harm had he done you? And the sheep, the symbol of candour, what right had you over his life? And this pigeon, the ornament of our dove-houses, just torn from its tender mate? O heavens! if there had been a Buffon[1] among the animals, in what class would he place man? The tiger, the vulture, the shark, would yield to him the first rank among those of prey." All the company concluded that the philosopher subsisted only on pulse, and they were afraid to offer him any part of the meats which he enumerated with so much compassion. "Nay, help me," said he: "since men have gone so far as to kill them, somebody must eat them." He declaimed, in like manner, at the same time that he ate of everything, against the profusion of victuals, the pains taken to procure them, and the delicacy of them. "O happy time!" said he, "when man browsed with the goats. Some drink, pray! Nature is greatly degenerated!" The philosopher got drunk in describing the clear brook where his forefathers used to quench their thirst.

Cleon seized the moment when wine makes us say everything, to discover the principle of this philosophical ill-humour, which extended itself towards all mankind. "Well," said he to Aristus, "you are here now among men: do you find them so odious? Confess that you condemned them on hearsay, and that they do not deserve all the harm that is said of them."—"On hearsay, sir! Learn that a philosopher judges not but after his own experience: it is because I have well considered, and thoroughly explored mankind, that I believe them to be vain, proud and unjust."—"Ah! pray now," interrupted Cleon, "spare us a little: our admiration of you merits at least some tenderness; for, after all, you cannot reproach us with not honouring merit."—"And how do you

[1] Buffon, the famous naturalist.

honour it?" replied the philosopher briskly: "is it by neglect and desertion that it is to be honoured? Oh! the philosophers of Greece were the oracles of their age, the legislators of their country. Nowadays wisdom and virtue languish in oblivion; intrigue, meanness, and servility carry all before them."—"Suppose that were the case," said Cleon, "it would possibly be the fault of those great men who disdain to show themselves."—"And would you have them then run their heads into the faces, or rather throw themselves at the feet of the dispensers of rewards?"—"It is true," said Cleon, "that they might spare themselves the trouble, and that such a person as yourself (pardon my bringing up your name) . . ." —"No harm done," replied the philosopher, with great humility."—"Such a person as yourself ought to be dispensed from paying his court."

"I pay my court! Ah! let them wait for that; I believe their pride would never have much to plume itself upon: I know how to set a right value on myself, thank heaven, and I would go and live in the desert rather than degrade my nature."—"It would be a great pity," said Cleon, "that society should lose you: born to enlighten mankind, you ought to live amongst them. You cannot think, ladies, the good that a philosopher does to the world: I will lay a wager now, that this gentleman has discovered a multitude of moral truths, and that there are perhaps at this very time fifty virtues of his own making."—"Virtues!" replied Aristus, looking down, "I have not struck out many of them, but I have unveiled many vices."—"How, sir!" said Lucinda to him, "why did not you leave them their veil? They would have been less ugly."—"I do not agree with you," replied Madam de Ponval: "I love an acknowledged vice better than an equivocal virtue: one knows at least how to take it."—"And yet see how they requite us!" cried Aristus, with indignation. "It is on this account that I have taken the resolution to live only for myself; let the world go on as it may."—"No," said

Clarissa politely to him, getting up from table, "I must have you live for us. Have you any urgent business at Paris?"—"None, madam: a philosopher has no business."—"Well, then, I shall keep you here. The country should be agreeable to philosophy, and I promise you solitude, repose, and freedom."—"Freedom, madam!" said the philosopher, in a lowered voice; "I am greatly afraid you will break your promise."

The company dispersed to walk, and Aristus, with a thoughtful air, pretended to go and meditate in a walk, where he proceeded to digest his dinner without thinking of anything. I am wrong; he thought of Clarissa, and said within himself, "A handsome wife, a good house, all the conveniences of life: it promises well! let us see what will come of it. It must be confessed," continued he, "that society is an amusing scene: if I were gallant now, forward, complaisant, amiable, they would scarce pay any attention to me: they see nothing else in the world, and the vanity of women is surfeited with these common homages; but to tame a bear, to civilise a philosopher, to bend his pride, to soften his soul, is a difficult and uncommon triumph, with which their self-love is not a little flattered. Clarissa, of her own accord, rushes into my toils; let me await her there, without compromising myself."

The company on their side amused themselves at the expense of Aristus. "He is a pleasant original enough," said Doris: "what shall we make of him?"—"A comedy," replied Cleon; "and if Clarissa will come into it, my plan is already settled." He communicated his thought, all the company applauded it, and Clarissa, after some difficulty, consented to play her part. She was much younger and handsomer than was necessary to move a philosopher; and some words, some looks which had escaped our sage, seemed to promise an excellent catastrophe. She threw herself, therefore, as it were by chance, into the same walk with Aristus. "I put you out," said she; "excuse me, I was only passing."—"You do not

interrupt me, madam; I can meditate in good company."—"You will do me a pleasure," says Clarissa: "I perceive that a philosopher does not think like other men, and I should be very glad to see things with your eyes."—"It is true, madam, that philosophy creates, as it were, a new world. The vulgar see only in the gross: the details of Nature are a spectacle reserved for us: it is to us that she appears disposing with an art so wonderful the fibres of these leaves, the stamina of these flowers, the texture of this rind: an ant-hill is to me a republic, and each of the atoms that compose the world appears in my eyes a new world itself."—"That is admirable!" said Clarissa; "what was it took up your thoughts just now?"—"These birds," replied the sage.—"They are happy, are they not?"—"Ah! very happy, without doubt; and can they be otherwise? Independence, equality, few wants, ready pleasures, oblivion of the past, no concern for the future, and their whole solicitude to support life, and to perpetuate their species: what lessons, madam, what lessons for mankind!"—"Confess, then, that the country is a delicious abode; for, after all, it brings us nearer to the condition of animals, and like them we seem to have no laws there, but the gentle instinct of Nature."—"Ah! madam, how true is all this! but the impression is effaced from the heart of man; society has ruined everything."—"You are right. This society is something very troublesome, and since we need nobody, it would be quite natural to live for one's self."—"Alas! that is what I have said a hundred times, and what I never cease to write; but nobody will listen to me: you, madam, for example, who seem to acknowledge the truth of this principle, could you have the strength to practise it?"

"I cannot but wish," said Clarissa, "that philosophy should come in fashion: I should not be the last to fall in with it, as I ought not to be the first to parade it."—"This is the language that every one speaks; nobody will venture to set the example, and, in the meantime, human nature groans,

loaded with the yoke of opinion, and the chains of custom."—What would you have us do, sir? Our ease, our honour, all that we hold dear, depends on decorum."—"Well, madam, observe this tyrannical decorum if you wear virtues as you do dresses, made to the taste of the age: but your soul is your own: society has no right but to externals, and you owe it only appearances. The decorum so much insisted on, is itself nothing more than appearances well preserved: but the interior, madam, the interior is the sanctuary of the will, and the will is independent."—"I conceive," said Clarissa, "that I may wish for what I please, provided I go no further."—"To be sure," replied the philosopher, "it is better to stop there than to run the hazard of committing imprudences: for, madam, do you know what a vicious woman is? She is a woman who has no regard, no respect to herself, in any case."—"What, sir," demanded Clarissa, affecting an air of satisfaction, "does vice then consist only in imprudence?"—"Before I answer you, madam, permit me to ask you, what is vice in your eyes? Is it not that which overturns order, which is harmful, or may be so?"—"The very thing."—"Very well, madam, all that is external. Why then submit your sentiments and your thoughts to prejudice? See in these birds that sweet and noble liberty which Nature gave you, and which you have lost."—"Ah!" said Clarissa, with a sigh, "the death of my husband had restored me this precious gift; but I am on the point of renouncing it again."—"O heaven! what do I hear?" cried he: "are you going to form a new chain?"—"Why, I do not know."—"You do not know!"—"They will have it so."—"And who, madam? who are the enemies who dare propose it to you? No; believe me, marriage is a yoke, and freedom is the supreme good. But who is the husband whom they would give you?"—"Cleon."—"Cleon, madam! I am no longer surprised at the way he makes himself at home here. He questions, decides, deigns sometimes to be affable, and has that conceited politeness

which seems to condescend to a level with us: it is plain that he is doing the honours of his own house, and I know, from henceforth, the respect and deference that I owe him." —"You owe each other a mutual civility, and I intend that in my house everybody shall be on an equality."—"You intend it, Clarissa! Alas! your choice destroys all equality between mankind, and the person who is to possess you . . . But let us talk no more of it, I have said too much already; it is not good for a philosopher to stay here. Permit me to take my leave."—"No," replied she, "I have need of you, and you plunge me into irresolutions, from which you alone can draw me. It must be confessed, that philosophy is a very comfortable thing; but if a philosopher were a deceiver, he would be a very dangerous friend! Adieu, I would not have them see us together: I am going to rejoin the company: come to us soon. So this," said she, as she left him, "is what they call a philosopher!"—"Courage," said he, on his side. "Cleon hangs only by a thread."

Clarissa, with blushes, gave an account of the first scene of the comedy, and her beginning was received with applause. But the Lady President, knitting her brow, "Do you intend," said she, "that I should be only a looker-on? No, no, I must play my part, and I assure you, it shall be pleasant. Do you think that you will subdue this sage? No: I will have the honour of it."—"You, madam!"—"Oh! you may laugh: my fifty years, my triple chin, and my mustachios of Spanish snuff defy all your graces." The whole company applauded this challenge by redoubled peals of laughter. "Nothing is more serious," resumed she, "and if one be not enough, you have only to join, and dispute the conquest with me: I defy you all three. Go, divine Doris, charming Lucinda, admirable Clarissa, go and display before his eyes all the seductions of beauty and coquetry! I laugh at them." She spoke these words in a tone of resolution sufficient to make her rivals tremble.

Cleon affected to appear dull and pensive at the arrival of

Aristus, and Clarissa assumed with the philosopher a reserved air of mystery. They spoke little, but ogled much. Aristus, on retiring to his apartment, found it furnished with all the inventions of luxury. "O heavens!" said he to the company, who for the sake of diverting themselves had conducted him thither, "O heavens! is it not ridiculous that all this preparation should be made for one man's sleep? Was it thus that they slept at Lacedæmon? O Lycurgus! what wouldst thou say? A toilette-table for me! This is downright mockery. Am I taken for a Sybarite? I must retire, I cannot stand it." —"Would you have us," said Clarissa, "unfurnish it on purpose for you? Take my advice, and enjoy the pleasures of life when they present themselves: a philosopher should know how to put up with everything, and accommodate himself to everything."—"Very well, madam," said he, somewhat appeased, "I must at present comply with you: but I shall never be able to sleep on this heap of down. Upon my word," says he, as he laid himself down, "this luxury is a fine thing!" and the philosopher fell asleep.

His dreams recalled to his remembrance his conversation with Clarissa, and he awoke with the pleasing idea, that the conventional virtue, which is called discretion in women, would make but a feeble resistance against him.

He was not yet up, when a lacquey came to offer him a bath. The bath was a good omen. "Be it so," said he, "I will bathe: the bath is a natural institution. As for perfumes, the earth yields them: let us not disdain her presents." He would fain have made use of the toilette apparatus which they had provided for him; but shame restrained him. He contented himself with giving to his philosophical negligence the most decent air he could, and the glass was twenty times consulted. "What a fright you have made yourself!" said Clarissa to him on seeing him appear: "why not dress like the rest of the world? That coat, that wig, give you a commonplace air which you have not

naturally."—"What! madam, is it by their air that we are to judge of mankind? Would you have me submit to the caprices of fashion, and be dressed like your Cleons?"—"Why not, sir? Do you not know that they derive an advantage from your simplicity, and that it is this in particular, that lessens the consideration due to you in people's opinions? I myself, in order to do you justice, have need of my reflection: the first sight makes against you, and it is very often the first sight that decides. Why not give Virtue all the charms of which she is capable?"—"No, madam, Art is not made for her. The more naked, the more beautiful; men disguise her when they endeavour to adorn her."—"Very well, sir, let her contemplate herself alone at her ease; as for me, I declare, that this low and rustic air displeases me. Is it not strange, that any one who has received from Nature a distinguished figure should take a pride in degrading it?"—"But, madam, what would you say, if a philosopher should busy himself about his dress, and set himself off like your marquises?"—"I should say, he seeks to please, and he does right; for do not flatter yourself, Aristus; there is no pleasing without taking a good deal of pains."—"Ah! I desire nothing so much as to please in your eyes."—"If such a desire really possesses you," replied Clarissa, with a tender look, "bestow at least a quarter of an hour upon it. Here, Jasmin, Jasmin! go, dress the gentleman's head." Aristus, blushing, yields at length to these gentle instances; and now behold the sage at his toilette!

The nimble hand of Jasmin disposes his locks with art: his physiognomy now displays itself; he admires the metamorphosis, and is scarce able to conceive it. "What will they say on seeing me?" said he to himself: "let them say what they please; but the philosopher looks very well." He presents himself puffed up with pride, but with an awkward and bashful air. "Ay, now," said Clarissa, "you look handsome. There is nothing now but the colour of those clothes

that offends my eyes."—"Ah! madam, for the sake of my reputation, leave me at least this characteristic of the gravity of my condition."—"And what then, by your leave, is this fantastic condition which you have so much at heart? I approve very much of people's being wise; but in my opinion all sorts of colours are indifferent to wisdom. Is this chesnut of Mr. Guillaume's more founded on Nature than sky-blue or gridelin? By what caprice is it that you imitate in your garments the husk of the chesnut rather than the leaf of the rose or the tuft of the lily with which the spring is crowned? Ah! for my part, I confess to you that gridelin charms my sight: that hue has an indescribable softness in it, which goes to my very soul, and I should think you the handsomest creature living in a suit of gridelin."—"Gridelin, madam! O heavens! a philosopher in gridelin!"—"Yes, sir, a very bright gridelin: what would you have? I am madly fond of it. By writing to Paris directly, you can have it by to-morrow afternoon, can you not?"—"What, madam?"—"A suit for the country of the colour of my ribands."—"No, madam, it is impossible."—"Pardon me, nothing is easier, the workmen need only be up all night."—"Alas! it is of mighty consequence how long they are busy in making me ridiculous! Consider, I beseech you, that such an extravagance as this would ruin my reputation."—"Well, sir, when you have lost that reputation, you will get another, and it is odds that you will gain by the exchange."—"I protest to you, madam, that it is shocking to me to displease you, but . . ." —"But you put me out of all patience; I do not love to be thwarted. It is very strange," continued she, in a tone of displeasure, "that you should refuse me a trifle. The importance you give it teaches me to be careful myself in matters that are more serious." With these words she quitted the room, leaving the philosopher confounded that so trifling an incident should destroy his hopes. "Gridelin!" said he, "gridelin! how ridiculous! what a contrast! she will have

it so, I must submit:" and the philosopher wrote for the clothes.

"You are obeyed, madam," said he to Clarissa, accosting her.—"Has it cost you much?" demanded she, with a smile of disdain.—"A great deal, madam, more than I can express; but there, you would have it so." All the company admired the philosopher's head. Madam President, above all, swore by the great gods, that she had never seen any man's head so well dressed before. Aristus thanked her for so flattering a compliment. "Compliments!" resumed she, "compliments! I never make any. They are the base coin of the world."—"Nothing was ever better conceived," cried the sage: "that deserves to be set down in writing." They perceived that Madam President was now beginning her attack, and they left them to themselves.

"So you think," said she, "that nobody but yourself can be sententious? I, your humble servant, am a philosopher too."—"You, madam! and of what sect? A Stoic or an Epicurean?"—"Oh! take my word for it, the name is nothing. I have ten thousand crowns a year, which I spend gaily: I have good champagne which I drink with my friends: I enjoy good health: I do what I please, and let every one live after his own manner. There is my sect for you!"—"You do well, and exactly what Epicurus taught."—"Oh! I assure you I was taught nothing: all this comes out of my own head. For these twenty years I have read nothing but my cellar-book and the bill of fare of my supper."—"Why, upon that footing you must be the happiest woman in the world."—"Happy! not entirely so: I want a husband of my own way of thinking. My president was a brute: good for nothing but the bar: he understood the law, and that was all. I want a man who knows how to love me, and who would attend to me alone."—"You may find a thousand, madam."—"Oh, I want but one: but I would have him be a good one. Birth, fortune, all that is perfectly indifferent to me; I attach myself only to the

person."—"Indeed, madam, you astonish me: you are the first woman of principle whom I have found; but is it precisely a husband that you want?"—"Yes, sir, a husband who shall be mine in proper form. These lovers are all rogues, who deceive us, and who forsake us without our being allowed to complain: whereas a husband is ours in the face of the world: and if mine should desert me, I should like to be able to go, documents in hand, and in all honour and honesty give a hundred slaps on the face to the insolent hussy that should have taken him from me."—"Very good, madam, very good! the right of property is an inviolable right. But do you know that there are very few souls like yours? What courage, what vigour!"—"Oh, I have as much of both as a lioness. I know I am not handsome; but ten thousand crowns a year, made over on the wedding-day, are worth all the prettinesses of a Lucinda or Clarissa; and though love be rare in this age, one ought to get it for ten thousand crowns." This conversation brought them back to the house, just as supper was announced.

Aristus seemed plunged in serious reflections; he was weighing the advantages and inconveniences that might attend his marrying the Lady President, and calculated how much longer a woman of fifty could live, swallowing every evening a bottle of champagne. A dispute which arose between Madam de Ponval and Clarissa drew him out of his reverie. Doris gave rise to the dispute. "Is it possible," said she, "that Madam President, who falls a-yawning the moment one talks sense to her, should have been able to support for a whole hour a *tête-à-tête* with a philosopher!"—"Why," replied Madam de Ponval, "it is because your sense is not common sense: ask this wise man here if mine be not good. We talked of the state that suits an honest woman, and he agrees with me, that a good husband is by much the best thing for her."—"O fie!" cried Clarissa, "are we made to be slaves? And what becomes then of that freedom which is the first of all goods?" Cleon declaimed against this system of freedom; he maintained,

that the union of hearts was very different from a state of slavery. Madam President supported this opinion, and declared that she could perceive no distinction between the love of freedom and the love of libertinism. "May this glass of wine," said she, "be the last I shall drink, if I ever form the least dependence on any man who shall not first have taken an oath that he will be only mine. All the rest is mere philandering."—"That is exactly," said Clarissa, "the great mortification of marriage. With its freedom love loses all its delicacy. Is it not so, sir?" demanded she of the philosopher.—"Why, madam, I used to think as you do; yet it must be confessed that if freedom has its charms, it has also its dangers, its rocks; happy dispositions are so great a good, and inconstancy is so natural to man, that the moment he feels a laudable inclination, he acts prudently in depriving himself of the fatal power of changing."—"Do you hear him, ladies? These are the men for my money! no flattery! this is what you may call a philosopher. Try to seduce him if you can; for my part I retire quite charmed. Adieu, philosopher, I want rest; I did not shut my eyes all last night, and I long to be asleep, in order to have the pleasure of dreaming." She accompanied this adieu with an amorous glance, twinkling with champagne. "Ladies," said Lucinda, "did you see that look?"—"Surely," replied Doris, "she is distracted for Aristus! that is clear."—"By love of me, madam! you do not really think so; neither our tastes, I am sure, nor our tempers are made for each other. I drink little, I swear still less, and I do not love to be confined."—"Ah! sir, ten thousand crowns a year!"—"Ten thousand crowns a year, madam, are an insult when mentioned to persons like myself."

These words were repeated the next day to Madam the President. "Oh! the insolent wretch!" said she; "I am piqued: you shall see him at my feet." I pass lightly over the nocturnal reflections of the sage Aristus. A fine coach, a commodious apartment at a good distance from his lady's,

and the best cook in Paris; such was his plan of life. "Our philosophers," said he, "will perhaps murmur a little. However, an ugly wife has a touch of the philosophical about her; at least, they will not suspect that I have sought the pleasures of sense."

The day of his triumph arrives, and the suit of gridelin along with it: he contemplated it, and blushed for vanity, rather than shame. Cleon, however, came to see him, with the air of a man agitated but controlling his agitation; and after having cast an eye on the preparations for his dressing, "Sir," said he, "if I had to do with a man of the world, I should propose to him, by way of preface, to exchange thrusts with me. But I am speaking to a philosopher, and I come to assault him with no other arms than frankness and virtue."—"What is the matter then?" demanded the sage, somewhat confounded at this preamble.—"I loved Clarissa, sir," replied Cleon: "she loved me, we were going to be married. I know not what change has suddenly come on her soul, but she will not hear me speak any more either of marriage or of love. I had at first only some suspicions concerning the cause; but this gridelin suit confirms them. Gridelin is her passion: you adopt her colours: you are my rival."—"I, sir?"—"I cannot doubt it, and all the circumstances that attest it crowd on my imagination: your secret walks, your whispers in the ear, the looks and words that have escaped you, her hatred against Madam de Ponval particularly, everything betrays you, everything serves to open my eyes. Hear then, sir, what I have to propose. One of us must give way. Violence is an unjust method; generosity will set us on good terms. I love, I idolise Clarissa; I had been happy but for you; I may still be so: my assiduities, time, and your absence, may bring her back to me. If, on the contrary, I must renounce her, you see before you a desperate man, and death shall be my refuge. Judge, Aristus, whether your situation be the same. Consult yourself, and answer me. If the happiness of your

life depends on giving up your conquest to me, I require nothing, and I retire."—"Go, sir," replied the philosopher to him, with a serene air; "you shall never overcome Aristus in a point of generosity; and whatever it may cost me, I will prove to you that I deserved this mark of esteem."

"At last," said he, when Cleon had left the room, "here is an opportunity of showing an heroical virtue. Ha! ha! you gentlemen of the world, you shall learn to admire us. . . . Perhaps they will not know it. . . . Oh yes: Clarissa will communicate it in confidence to her friends; these will tell it again to others: the adventure is uncommon enough to make a noise; after all, the worst that can happen will be to publish it myself. It is necessary that a good deed should be known, and it matters not which way: our age has need of these examples: they are lessons for mankind. . . . However, let me not become a dupe to my own virtues, and dispossess myself of Clarissa before I am sure of Madam President. Let me see what effect champagne and sleep may have produced."

While he reflected thus on his conduct, the philosopher dressed himself. The industrious Jasmin surpassed himself in dressing his head: the gridelin suit was put on before the looking-glass with a secret complacency, and the sage sallied out all radiant to visit Madam President, who received him with an exclamation of surprise. But passing all of a sudden from joy to confusion, "I perceive," said she, "Clarissa's favourite colour: you are attentive to study her taste. Go, Aristus, go and profit by the trouble you take to please her: it will, no doubt, have its reward."—"My natural ingenuousness," replied the philosopher, "permits me not to conceal from you, that in the choice of this colour I only followed her caprice. I will do more, madam; I will confess that my first desire was to please in her eyes. The wisest is not without weakness; and when a woman anticipates us by flattering attentions, it is difficult not to be touched with them. But how my gratitude is weakened! I acknowledge it with reproach

to myself, madam, and you ought also to reproach yourself for it."—"Ah! philosopher, why is this not true! But this gridelin confounds all my ideas."—"Very well, madam, I assumed it with regret; I now go to quit it with joy; and if my first simplicity . . ."—"No, stay, I think you charming. But what am I saying? Ah, how happy are people in being so handsome! Aristus, why am I not beautiful!"—"What! madam, do not you know that ugliness and beauty exist only in opinion? Nothing is handsome, nothing ugly in itself. Beauty in one country is far from being reckoned beauty in another; so many men, so many minds." —"You flatter me," said Madam President, with a childish bashfulness, and pretending to blush: "but I know, alas! but too well, that I have nothing beautiful in me except my soul." —"Very well, and is not this the supreme beauty, the only charm worthy to touch the heart?"—"Ah, philosopher, believe me, such beauty by itself has few charms."—"It has few, no doubt, for the vulgar; but, let me repeat it once more, you are not reduced to that. Is there nothing in a noble air, a commanding look, and an expressive countenance! And then as to majesty, is she not the queen of the Graces?"—"And for this plumpness of mine, what say you to that?"—"Ah, madam, this plumpness, which is reckoned an excess among us, is a beauty in Asia. Do you think, for example, that the Turks have no skill in women? Well then, all the elegant figures which we admire at Paris would not even be admitted into the Grand Seignior's seraglio: and the Grand Seignior is no fool. In a word, glowing health is the mother of pleasure, and plumpness is its symbol."—"You will bring me presently to believe that my fat is not unbecoming. But for this nose of mine, this nose without end, which runs out before my face."—"Why, good God, what do you complain of? Were not the noses of the Roman matrons noses without end? Observe all the ancient busts."—"But at least they had not this great mouth, and such blubber lips."—"Thick lips,

madam, are the charm of African beauties: they are, as it were, two cushions, on which soft and tender pleasure takes its repose. As to a wide mouth, I know nothing that gives the countenance more openness and gaiety."—"True, when the teeth are fine; but unhappily . . ."—"Go to Siam, there fine teeth are vulgar, and it is a scandal even to have any. Thus all that is called beauty depends on the caprice of mankind, and the only real beauty is the object which has charmed us."—"Shall I be yours then, my dear philosopher?" demanded she, hiding her face behind her fan.—"Pardon me, madam, if I hesitate. My delicacy renders me timid, and I profess a disinterestedness not yet sufficiently known to you, to be above suspicion. You have talked to me of ten thousand crowns a year, and that circumstance makes me tremble."—"Go, sir, you are too just to impute to me such mean suspicions; it is Clarissa that detains you; I see your evasions; leave me."—"Yes, I leave you, to go and acquit myself of the promise I have just made to Cleon. He was dismissed, he complained to me of it, and I have promised him to induce Clarissa to give him her hand. Now believe that I love her if you like."—"Is it possible? Oh, you enchant me, and I cannot resist this sacrifice. Go and see her; I will await you here; do not let me languish: this very evening we will leave the country."

"I wonder at myself," said he, as he was going off, "for having the courage to marry her. She is frightful; but she is rich." He came to Clarissa, found her at her toilette, and Cleon along with her, who assumed, on seeing him, a dejected air. "Oh! what a handsome suit!" cried she. "Come this way, that I may see you. It is quite delicious, is it not, Cleon? It was my choice."—"I see it plainly, madam," replied Cleon, with a melancholy air.—"Let us drop this trifling," interrupted the philosopher; "I have come to clear myself of a crime of which I am accused, and to fulfil a serious duty. Cleon loves you, you love him; he has lost your heart, he tells me, and

I am the cause of it."—"Yes, sir: and why all this mystery? I have just been making a declaration of it to him."—"And I, madam, declare to you, that I will never cause unhappiness to a worthy man, who merits you, and dies if he loses you. I love you as much as he can love you: it is a confession which I am not ashamed to make; but his inclination has been more rooted by the unconquerable force of habit than mine, and perhaps also I shall find in myself resources which he has not in himself."—"Oh, what a wonderful man!" cried Cleon, embracing the philosopher. "What shall I say to you! You confound me."—"There is no mighty matter in all this," replied the philosopher, with humility: "your generosity set the example, I only imitate you."—"Come, ladies," said Clarissa to Lucinda and Doris, whom she saw appear at that instant, "come and be witnesses of the triumph of philosophy. Aristus resigns me to his rival, and sacrifices his love for me to the happiness of a man he hardly knows." Their astonishment and admiration were acted to the life; and Aristus, taking Clarissa's hand, which he put into Cleon's, snuffed up in abundance, with a supercilious modesty, the incense of adoration. "Be happy," said he to them, "and cease your astonishment at an effort, which, however painful, carries its recompense along with it. What would a philosopher be, if virtue were not all in all with him?" At these words he retired, as it were, to withdraw himself from his glory.

Madam President waited the philosopher's coming. "Is it done then?" demanded she of him.—"Yes, madam, they are united; I am now my own and yours."—"Oh, I triumph: you are mine. Come here then, that I may enchain you."—"Ah! madam," said he, falling at her knees, "what dominion you have acquired over me! O Socrates! O Plato! what is become of your disciple? Do you yet know him in this state of abasement!" While he spoke thus, Madam President took a rose-coloured riband, which she bound about the sage's

neck, and imitating Lucinda in the *Oracle*,[1] with the most comical infantine air in the world called him by the name of *Charmer.* "Good heaven! what would become of me if anybody knew. . . . Ah, madam," said he, "let us fly, let us



"See," said she to the company, "see this proud man, who sighs at my feet for the beauty of my purse: I give him up to you, I have played my part."

banish ourselves from a society that watches us; spare me the humiliation."—"What do you call humiliation? I must have you glory in their presence that you are mine, that you wear

[1] A farce.

my chain." At these words the door opened, and Madam President rose from her chair, holding the philosopher in a string. "See," said she to the company, "see this proud man, who sighs at my feet for the beauty of my purse: I give him up to you, I have played my part." At this picture the roof resounded with the name of *Charmer*, and with innumerable peals of laughter. Aristus, tearing his hair, and rending his clothes with rage, launched out into reproaches on the perfidy of women, and went off to compose a book against the age, in which he roundly asserted, that there was not a single wise man except himself.

Notes to "THE PRETENDED PHILOSOPHER"

P. 85.—"*Chesnut of Mr. Guillaume's.*"

I presume that this refers to the famous passage in Molière's *L'Amour Médecin*, where the still better known advice of M. Josse the goldsmith, that Sganarelle shall buy jewels for his daughter, is followed up by M. Guillaume the upholsterer with a similar recommendation of tapestry. Sganarelle retorts by supposing that his friend M. Guillaume has something of the kind that he wants to get off his hands; and Clarissa by the reference seems to suggest that Aristus's tailor recommended the chesnut-coloured coat on similar principles.

P. 85.—"*Gridelin.*"

This, which is a word of Dryden's, seems good enough for *gris-de-lin*, which my predecessor rather rashly translates "rose-colour." *Gris-de-lin* is not *couleur-de-rose*, which is actually used later for the ribbon with which the Présidente enchains Aristus. It is a greyish white, shot or tinged with red.



The Bad Mother

AMONG the monstrous productions of nature, may be reckoned the heart of a mother who loves one of her children to the exclusion of all the rest. I do not mean an enlightened tenderness, which distinguishes among the young plants which it cultivates, that which yields the best returns to its early care; I speak of a blind fondness, frequently exclusive, sometimes jealous, which marks out one idol and several victims amid the little innocents brought into the world, for each of whom we are impartially bound to soften the burthen of life. Of this error, so common and so shameful to human nature, I am now about to give an example.

In one of our maritime provinces, an intendant of great moral worth, M. de Carandon, who had rendered himself respectable by his severity in repressing grievances, making it a principle to favour the weak, and control the strong, died poor, and almost insolvent. He left behind him a daughter, whom nobody would marry, because she had much pride,

little beauty, and no fortune. At last, a rich and honest merchant made his addresses to her, out of respect to the memory of her father. "He has done us so many good offices," said the worthy Corée (this was the merchant's name), "it is but just that some one of us should repay them to the daughter." So Corée offered himself in an humble manner, and Mademoiselle de Carandon, with a great deal of reluctance, consented to give him her hand, on condition that she should maintain an absolute authority in his house. The good man's respect for the memory of the father extended even to the daughter: he consulted her as his oracle; and if at any time he happened to differ in opinion from her, she had only to utter these silencing expressions, "The late M. de Carandon, my father . . ." Corée did not wait for her conclusion to confess himself in the wrong.

He died rather young, and left her two children, of which she had condescended to permit him to be the father. On his death-bed he thought it his duty to regulate the partition of his effects; but M. de Carandon held it, as she told him, for a maxim, that in order to retain children in dependence on a mother, it was necessary to make her the dispenser of their effects. This law determined Corée's will; and his inheritance was left in the hands of his wife, with the fatal right of distributing it among her children as she should think proper. Of these two children the eldest was her delight; not that he was handsomer, or of a more happy disposition, than the younger, but because she had run some danger of her life in bringing him into the world; he first had made her experience the pains and joy of child-bed; he had possessed himself of her tenderness, which he also seemed to have exhausted; she had, in short, all the bad reasons that a bad mother could have for loving only him.

Little Jemmy was the rejected child: his mother hardly vouchsafed to see him, and never spoke to him but to chide him. The poor child, intimidated, durst not look up before

her, nor answer her without trembling. He had, she said, his father's disposition, a vulgar soul, and the air, as they say, of the vulgar.

As to the eldest, whom she had taken care to render as headstrong, disobedient, and humoursome as possible, he was gentility itself: his obstinacy was called greatness of spirit; his humours, excess of sensibility. She was delighted to see that he would never give up a point when he was in the right; and you must know that he was never in the wrong. He was constantly pronounced a chip of the right block; he had, it seemed, the honour of resembling madam his mamma. This eldest boy, who was styled M. de l'Etang (for it was not thought right to leave him the name of Corée), had masters of all sorts: the lessons they set were for him alone, but little Jemmy reaped the fruit of them; insomuch that at the end of a few years Jemmy knew all that they had taught M. de l'Etang, who knew nothing at all.

The nurses, who make a practice of attributing to children all the little wit they have themselves, and who ruminate all the morning on the pretty things they are to say in the day, had made the mother, whose weakness they were well acquainted with, believe that her eldest son was a prodigy. The masters, less complaisant, or less artful, while they complained of the indocility and inattention of this favourite, were boundless in their encomiums on Jemmy: they did not absolutely say that M. de l'Etang was a blockhead, but they said that little Jemmy had the genius of an angel. The mother's vanity was wounded; and with an injustice, which one would not believe existed in nature, if this vice of mothers were less in fashion, she redoubled her aversion to the little wretch, became jealous of his improvement, and resolved to take away from her spoiled child the humiliation of a comparison.

A very affecting adventure awakened, however, in her the sentiments of nature; but this revulsion only humbled, without correcting her. Jemmy was ten years of age, M. de

l'Etang near fifteen, when she fell dangerously ill. The eldest employed himself about his pleasures, and very little about his mother's health. It is the punishment of foolish mothers to love unnatural children. However, her condition began to cause anxiety; Jemmy perceived it, and his little heart was seized with grief and fear: the impatience to see his mother grew too strong for him to keep in the background. They had accustomed him never to appear but when he was called; but at last his tenderness gave him courage. He seized the instant when the chamber door was half open, entered silent and with trembling steps, and approached his mother's bed. "Is it you, my son?" said she.—"No, mamma, it is Jemmy." This natural and overwhelming answer pierced the soul of this unjust woman with shame and grief; but a few caresses from her bad son soon restored him to his full ascendency; and Jemmy, in the end, was neither the better beloved, nor the less worthy to be so.

Scarce was Madame Corée recovered, when she resumed the design of banishing him her house; her pretext was, that M. de l'Etang being naturally lively, was too easily distracted to have a companion in his studies; and the impertinent prepossessions of the masters for the child, who was the most humble and fawning with them, might easily discourage the other, whose spirit being higher, and less tractable, required more management. It was her pleasure, therefore, that l'Etang should be the only object of their cares, and she got rid of the unfortunate Jemmy by exiling him to school.

At sixteen l'Etang quitted his masters in mathematics, physics, music, &c., just as he had taken them: he began his exercises, which he performed much in the same manner as he had done his studies; and at twenty he appeared in the world with the self-sufficiency of a coxcomb, who has heard of everything, but reflected on nothing.

Jemmy, on his part, had passed through school; and his

mother was quite wearied with the commendations they gave him. "Well then," said she, "since he is so good a boy,



He entered silent and with trembling steps. "Is it you, my son?" said she. "No, mamma, it is Jemmy."

he will succeed in the Church; he has nothing to do but to take to that course of life."

Unfortunately Jemmy had no inclination for the ecclesiastic state; he came therefore to entreat his mother to dispense with his entering into it. "You imagine then," said she to him, with cold and severe hauteur, "that I have enough to maintain you in the world? I assure you I have not. Your father's fortune was not so considerable as was imagined; it will scarce be sufficient to settle your elder brother. For your part, you have only to consider whether you will pursue the career of benefices or of arms; whether you will have your head shaven or broken; in short, whether you will take orders or a lieutenancy of infantry; this is all that I can do for you." Jemmy answered her with respect, that there were less violent courses to be taken by the son of a merchant. At these words Madame de Carandon was near dying with grief at having brought into the world a son so little worthy of her, and forbad him her sight. Young Corée, distressed at having incurred his mother's anger, retired sighing, and resolved to try whether fortune would be less cruel to him than nature. He learnt that a vessel was on the point of sailing for the West Indies, whither he had a design of repairing. He writ to his mother to ask her consent, her blessing, and a stock of goods. The two first articles were amply granted him, but the latter very sparingly.

His mother, too happy at being rid of him, was good enough to see him before his departure, and, while she embraced him, bestowed on him a few tears. His brother also had the kindness to wish him a good voyage. These were the first caresses he had ever received from his relations; his feeling heart was penetrated thereby: yet he durst not ask them to write to him. But he had a schoolfellow, by whom he was tenderly beloved: and he conjured him at parting now and then to send him news of his mother.

She was now only employed in the care of settling her favourite son. He declared for the bar: they obtained him a dispensation from its studies; and he was soon admitted

into the sanctuary of the laws. Nothing remained wanting but an advantageous marriage; a rich heiress was suggested; but the settlement of the widow's fortune was demanded. She had the weakness to consent to it, scarce reserving to herself sufficient to live decently; well assured that her son's fortune would be always at her disposal.

So, at the age of twenty-five, M. de l'Etang found himself a dapper little counsellor, neglecting his wife as much as his mother, taking great care of his own person, and paying very little regard to the business of the courts. As it was genteel for a husband to have somebody besides his wife, l'Etang thought it his duty to set up for a man of intrigue. A young girl, whom he ogled at the play, responded to his enticements, received him at her lodgings with a great deal of politeness, told him he was charming, which he very readily believed, and in a short time eased him of a pocket-book with ten thousand crowns. But as there is no such a thing as eternal love, this perjured beauty quitted him at the expiration of three months for a young English lord, equally foolish and more prodigal. L'Etang, who could not conceive how any one could dismiss such a person as himself, resolved to avenge himself by taking a mistress still more celebrated, and loading her with favours. His new conquest raised him a thousand rivals; and when he compared himself with a crowd of adorers who sighed for her in vain, he had the pleasure of thinking himself more lovable, as he found himself more fortunate. However, having perceived that he was not without uneasiness, she was desirous of convincing him, that there was nothing in the world which she was not resolved to quit for him, and she proposed, for the sake of avoiding intrusion, that they should go together to Paris to forget all the world, and live only for each other. L'Etang was transported at this mark of tenderness. Everything was got ready for the journey; they set out, they arrived, and they chose their retreat in the neighbourhood of the Palais Royal. Fatima (that was the

name of this beauty) asked and obtained, without difficulty, a coach to take the air. L'Etang was surprised at the number of friends that he found in the good city. These friends had never seen him; but his merit attracted them in crowds. Fatima received none but l'Etang's associates, and he was always very sure of his friends and of her. This charming woman had, however, one weakness: she believed in dreams. One night she had had one which could not, she said, be effaced from her memory. L'Etang begged to know this dream which engaged her attention so seriously. "I dreamed," said she, "that I was in a delicious apartment. There was a damask bed of three different colours, with tapestry and sofas suited to this superb bed; panels dazzling with gold, cabinets by Boule, porcelain from Japan, Chinese grotesques, the prettiest in the world; but all this was nothing. A toilette was ready set out; I drew near it; what did I see? My heart beats at it; a casket of diamonds; and such diamonds! the most beautiful aigrette, the finest ear-rings, the handsomest collar, and a *rivière* without end. I am sure, sir, something very extraordinary will happen to me. This dream has affected me too strongly, and my dreams never deceive me."

It was in vain that M. de l'Etang employed all his eloquence to persuade her that dreams signified nothing; she maintained that this dream did signify something, and at length, he feared lest some of his rivals should propose to realise it. He was under a necessity therefore of capitulating, and, except in some few circumstances, resolved to accomplish it himself. We may easily judge, that this experiment did not cure her of dreaming: she took a delight in it, and dreamed so often, that even the fortune of good old Corée became hardly anything more than a dream. M. de l'Etang's young wife, to whom this journey had not been very agreeable, demanded a separation of goods from a husband who abandoned her; and her portion, which he was obliged to restore, embarrassed him still further.

Play is a resource. L'Etang thought he excelled at piquet;

his friends, who made up a common purse, all betted for him, while one of them played against him. Every time that he discarded, "Faith," saith one of the bettors, "that is well played!"—"There is no playing better," said another. In short, M. de l'Etang's play was the best in the world; but he never had the aces. While they stripped him little by little, the faithful Fatima, who perceived his decline, dreamed one night that she quitted him, and left him the next day. However, as it is mortifying to accept dethronement, he made it a point of honour not to abate anything of his grandeur, so that in a few years he was ruined.

He was now at his last shifts, when the good lady his mother, who had not managed her own reserve better, wrote to him to desire some money. He returned her answer, that he was very sorry; but that, far from being able to send her any relief, he stood in need of it himself. The alarm was already spread among their creditors, and the question was, who should first seize the ruins of their fortune. "What have I done!" said the distracted mother: "I have stripped myself of all for a son who has squandered everything."

In the meantime, what became of the unfortunate Jemmy? Jemmy, with a good understanding, the best heart, the handsomest figure in the world, and his little venture, had happily arrived at St. Domingo. It is well known how easy a Frenchman of good morals, and a good person, finds it to establish himself in these islands. The name of Corée, his own good sense and prudence, soon acquired him the confidence of the inhabitants. With the assistances that were offered him, he purchased himself a plantation, cultivated it, and rendered it flourishing; trade, which was then very brisk, enriched him in a short time, and in the space of five years he had become an object of rivalry to the handsomest and richest widows and damsels of the colony. But, alas! his schoolfellow, who till that time had given him none but the most satisfactory news, now sent him word that his brother was ruined, and that his

mother, abandoned by everybody, was driven to the most dreadful extremities. This fatal letter was bedewed with tears. "Ah! my poor mother!" cried he, "I will fly to your relief." He would not trust this charge to anybody. Accident, infidelity, neglect, or delay, might deprive her of the assistance sent by her son, and leave her to perish in indigence and despair. "Nothing ought to keep back a son," said he to himself, "when the honour and life of a mother are at stake."

With such sentiments, Corée now only employed himself in the care of rendering his riches portable. He sold all his possessions, and this sacrifice cost him nothing at heart; but he could not but feel some regret for a more precious treasure, which he left in America. Lucella, the young widow of an old colonist, who had left her immense riches, had cast upon Corée one of those looks which seem to pierce to the bottom of the soul, and to unravel its character; one of those looks which decide opinion, determine inclination, and the sudden and confused effect of which is generally taken for a sympathetic emotion. She had imagined she saw in this young man everything that could render a virtuous and sensitive woman happy; and her love for him had not waited for reflection to give it birth and discover itself. Corée, on his side, had distinguished her among her rivals, as the most worthy of captivating the heart of a wise and virtuous man. Lucella, with a figure the most noble and interesting; an air the most animated, and yet the most modest; a brown complexion, but fresher than the rose; hair of ebon blackness, and teeth of a dazzling whiteness and enamel; the stature and gait of one of Diana's nymphs; the smile and look of the companions of Venus—Lucella besides all these charms was endowed with that courageous spirit, that loftiness of character, that justness of ideas, that rectitude of sentiments, which make us say, awkwardly enough, that such a woman has the soul of a man. It was not one of Lucella's principles to be ashamed of a virtuous inclination. Scarce had Corée confessed to her the

choice of his heart, when he obtained from her, without evasion, a like confession, by way of reply; and their mutual inclination becoming more tender, in proportion as it became more deliberate, now wanted nothing but to be consecrated at the altar. Some disputes, concerning the succession of Lucella's husband, had retarded their happiness. These disputes were on the point of being settled, when the letter from Corée's friend arrived, to tear him all at once from what he held dearest in the world, except his mother. He repaired to the beauteous widow's, showed her the letter from his friend, and asked her advice. "I flatter myself," said she, "that you have no need of it. Convert your wealth into merchantable commodities, hasten to the relief of your mother, pay your respects to all your friends, and come back again: my fortune awaits you. If I die, my will shall secure it to you; if I live, you know what right instead of a will you will have over it." Corée, struck with gratitude and admiration, seized the hands of this generous woman, and bathed them with his tears; but as he was launching out in encomiums on her, "Go," said she to him, "you are a child: entertain not the prejudices of Europe. The moment that a woman does anything tolerably handsome, men cry her up as a prodigy, as if nature had not given us a soul. Should you, in my place now, be much pleased to see me regard with astonishment, and as a phenomenon, the pure action of a good heart in you?"—"Pardon me," said Corée, "I ought to have expected it; but your principles, your sentiments, the ease, the simplicity of your virtues enchant me: I admire them without being amazed at them."—"Go, my child," said she to him, kissing him on both cheeks, "such as God has made me I am thine. Do your duty, and return as soon as possible."

He embarked, and with him he embarked all his fortune. The passage was pretty favourable till they came towards the Canaries; but there their vessel, pursued by a corsair from Morocco, was obliged to seek for safety in its sails. The

corsair which chased them was on the point of coming up with them; and the captain, terrified at the danger of being boarded, was about to strike to the pirate. "Oh! my dear mother!" cried Corée, embracing the casket in which were contained all his hopes, and then tearing his hair with grief and rage; "No," said he, "this barbarous African shall eat my heart first." Then addressing himself to the captain, the crew, and the affrighted passengers, "What! my friends," said he, "shall we surrender like cowards? Shall we suffer this robber to carry us to Morocco, loaded with irons, and to sell us like beasts? Are we unarmed? Are the people on board the enemy's ship invulnerable? or are they braver than we? They want to board us; let them! what then? we shall be at close quarters." His courage reanimated their spirits, and the captain, embracing him, extolled him for having set the example.

Everything was now got ready for defence; the corsair boarded them: the vessels dashed against each other: death flew visible on both sides. In a short time the two ships were covered with a cloud of smoke and fire. The cannonade ceased; daylight appeared, and the sword singled out its victims. Corée, sabre in hand, made a dreadful slaughter; the instant he saw an African throw himself on board, he ran up to him, and clove him in two, crying out, "Oh! my poor mother!" His fury was as that of the lioness defending her little ones; it was the last effort of nature in despair: and the gentlest, the tenderest heart that ever existed, was now become the most violent and bloody. The captain discerned him everywhere, his eye flashing fire, and his arm drenched in blood. "This is not a mortal," said his companions, "it is a God who fights for us." His example kindled their courage. At length he found himself hand to hand with the chief of the barbarians. "My God," cried he, "have pity on my mother!" and at these words, with a back-handed blow, he ripped the pirate up. From this moment the victory was decided: the few who were left of the Moorish crew begged

their lives, and were put in irons. Corée's vessel, with her booty, arrived at length on the coast of France; and this worthy son, without allowing himself one night's repose, repaired with his treasure to his unhappy mother. He found her on the brink of the grave, and in a state more dreadful than death itself; stripped of all relief, and in the care of one man-servant, who, disgusted at having to undergo the indigence to which she was reduced, grudgingly paid her the last duties of an humiliating pity. The shame of her situation had induced her to forbid this servant from admitting any person, except the priest and the charitable physician, who sometimes visited her. Corée asked to see her, and was refused.

"Tell my name," said he to the servant.—"And what is your name?"—"Jemmy." The servant approached the bed. "A stranger," says he, "asks to see you, madam."—"Alas! and who is this stranger?"—"He says that his name is Jemmy." At this name her heart was so violently agitated, that she was near expiring. "Ah! my son," said she, in a faint voice, and lifting upon him her dying eyelids, "Ah! my son, at what a moment do you come to see your mother! Your hand will soon close her eyes." What was the grief of this pious and tender child, to see that mother whom he had left in the bosom of luxury and opulence, to see her now on a bed hung with rags, the very description of which would make the gorge rise, if it were permitted me to give it! "Oh! my mother," cried he, throwing himself upon this bed of woe: his sobs choked his voice, and the rivers of tears with which he bathed the bosom of his expiring mother, were for a long time the only expression of his grief and love. "Heaven punishes me," replied she, "for having too much loved an unnatural son; for having . . ." He interrupted her: "All is atoned for, my dear mother," said this virtuous young man: "Live: Fortune has loaded me with her favours, I come to pour them into the lap of Nature: it is for you that they are given me. Live: I have enough to make you love life."—"Ah! my dear child,

if I have any desire to live, it is to expiate my injustice, it is to love a son of whom I was not worthy, a son whom I have deprived of his inheritance." At these words she covered her face as unworthy to see the light. "Ah! madam," cried he, pressing her in his arms, "deprive me not of the sight of my mother. I have come across the ocean to seek and relieve her." At this instant arrived the priest and the physician. "See there," said she, "my child, the only comforters that heaven has left me; without their charity I should now be no more." Corée embraced them, bursting into tears. "My friends!" says he to them, "my benefactors! what do I not owe you! but for you I should no longer have had a mother: go on, recall her to life. I am rich; I am come to make her happy. Redouble your cares, your consolations, your assistances; restore her to me." The physician sensibly perceived that this situation was too violent for the patient. "Go, sir," said he to Corée, "trust in our zeal, and think of nothing but how to provide her a convenient and wholesome lodging; to which the lady shall this evening be removed."

Change of air, proper nourishment, or rather the revolution created by joy, and the calm which succeeded it, insensibly reanimated the organs of life. A profound chagrin had been the ground of the disease; consolation was the remedy. Corée learnt that his unhappy brother had just perished in misery. I draw a veil over the frightful picture of his death, which he had but too justly merited. They kept the knowledge of it from a tender mother, who was as yet too weak to support, without expiring, a new attack of grief. She learnt it at last, when her health was better established. All the wounds of her heart were now opened afresh, and the maternal tears trickled from her eyes. But heaven, while it took away from her a son unworthy of her fondness, restored her one who had merited it by every tender and touching tie of nature and virtue. He confided to her the desires of his soul; which were to embrace at once his mother and his wife. Madame Corée

seized with joy the opportunity of going over with her son to America. A city filled with her follies and misfortunes, was to her an odious place of residence; and the moment when she embarked gave her a new life. Heaven, which protects piety, granted them a favourable passage. Lucella received the mother of her lover as she would have received her own. Hymen made these lovers the happiest of couples, and their days still roll on in that unalterable peace, in those pure and serene pleasures, which are the portion of virtue.

Note to "THE BAD MOTHER"

P. 99.—"*A chip of the right block.*"

It is not very easy to find the exact phrase for ***sentait son bien***, though my predecessor's "he knew his own good" is undoubtedly the wrong one. It belongs to that class of the uses of ***sentir*** which is still exemplified by ***sent son gentilhomme***, &c. ("smacks of" "shows"), but is now obsolete. Alternate renderings would be "showed his breeding," "was of the right stamp," &c.



The Good Mother

THE care of a mother for her children is of all duties the most religiously observed in nature. This universal sentiment governs all the passions; it prevails even over the love of life. It renders the fiercest of animals tender and gentle, the most sluggish indefatigable, the most timid courageous to excess: not one of them loses sight of its little ones, till the moment that their care becomes useless. Only among mankind do we see the odious examples of a too early desertion.

It is in the midst of the world, where vice, ingenious in disguising itself, takes a thousand seducing forms; it is there, above all, that the most happy disposition requires to be enlightened without ceasing. The more reefs there are, and the more they are hidden, the more need has the frail bark of innocence and happiness of a prudent pilot. What would have been, for instance, the fate of Mademoiselle du Troëne, if heaven had not made expressly for her a mother, who was one of ten thousand?

This admirable widow had devoted to the education of an

only daughter the most agreeable years of her life. These had been her reflections at the age of five-and-twenty:

"I have lost my husband," said she; "I have nothing but my daughter and myself: shall I live for myself? or shall I live for her? The world smiles upon me, and it pleases me still; but if I give myself up to it, I abandon my daughter, and hazard her happiness and my own. Suppose that a life of noise and dissipation has all the charms that are attributed to it, how long may I be able to taste them? How few of my years, which are rolling on, have I to pass in the world? how many in solitude and the bosom of my child? This world, which invites me now, will dismiss me soon without pity; and if my daughter forgets herself, according to my example—if she is unhappy through my negligence, what will be my comfort? Let me in good time make a graceful retreat: let me render it agreeable as well as honourable; and let me sacrifice to my daughter, who is everything to me, that alien multitude, to whom in a short time I shall be nothing."

From that moment this prudent mother became the friend and companion of her daughter. But to obtain her confidence was not the work of a day.

Emily (that was the young lady's name) had received from nature a soul susceptible of the most lively impressions; and her mother, who studied her incessantly, experienced an uneasy joy on perceiving this sensibility, which does so much harm and so much good. "Happy," said she sometimes, "happy the husband whom she shall love, if he is deserving of her tenderness; if by esteem and friendship he knows how to render dear to her the cares she takes to please him! But woe be to him, if he humbles and shocks her: her wounded delicacy will be the torment of them both. I see that if a reproach escapes even me, a slight complaint which she has not merited, bitter tears trickle from her eyes; her drooping heart is dispirited. No one is easier led; no one easier startled."

Quiet as was the life of Madame du Troëne, it was, however, conformable to her condition, and suitable to the design she had of choosing at leisure, and with her eyes open, a husband worthy of Emily. A crowd of admirers, caught by the charms of the daughter, paid, according to custom, assiduous court to the mother. Of this number was the Marquis de Verglan, who, to his own misfortune, was endowed with a very handsome figure. His glass and the ladies had so often told him so, that he could not but believe it. He listened to them with pleasure, contemplated himself with delight, smiled upon himself, and was eternally singing his own praises. Nothing could be objected to his politeness; but it was so cold, and so slight, in comparison to the attentions with which he honoured himself, that one might clearly perceive that he still held the first place in his own esteem. He would have had, without thinking on them, all the graces of nature: he spoiled them all by affecting them. In regard to understanding, he wanted only justness, or rather reflection. Nobody would have talked better than he, if he had known what he was going to say; but it was his first care to be of an opinion contrary to that of somebody else. Right or wrong was all one to him; he was sure of dazzling, of seducing, of persuading to whatever he would. He knew by heart all that little toilette chit-chat, all those pretty things which mean nothing. He was thoroughly versed in all the love anecdotes of the city and court: who was the gallant of yesterday, who of to-day, who of the morrow: and how many times in the year such and such a lady had changed her admirers. He even knew a certain person who had refused to be upon the list, and who could have supplanted all his rivals, if he had chosen to give himself the trouble.

This young coxcomb was the son of an old friend of M. du Troëne, and the widow spoke of him to her daughter with a kind of compassion. "It is a pity," said she, "that they spoil this young man. He is of a good family, and might have succeeded." He had already succeeded but too well in

the heart of Emily. That which is ridiculous in the eyes of a mother, is not always so in the eyes of a daughter. Youth is indulgent to youth; and there are such things as beautiful defects.

Verglan, on his side, thought Emily tolerably handsome, though a little unformed; but that might be corrected. He took but very little care to please her; but when the first impression is made, everything contributes to sink it deeper. The very dissipation of this young scatter-brain was a new attraction to Emily, as it threatened her with the danger of losing him: and nothing hastens, so much as jealousy, the progress of a growing love.

In giving an account of his life to Madame du Troëne, Verglan naturally represented himself as the most sought-after man in the world. Madame du Troëne dropt a cautious hint concerning modesty, but he protested that nobody was less vain than himself; that he knew perfectly well that it was not for his own sake that they sought him; that his birth did a great deal, and that he owed the rest to his wit and figure, qualities which he had not given himself, and which he was far from pluming himself on. The more pleasure Emily felt in seeing and hearing him, the more care she took to conceal it. A reproach from her mother would have wounded her to the heart; and this delicate sensibility rendered her fearful to excess.

In the meantime, Emily's charms, with which Verglan was so faintly touched, had inspired the discreet and modest Belzors with the tenderest passion. A just way of thinking, and an upright heart, formed the basis of his character. His pleasant and open countenance was still more ennobled by the high idea that was conceived of his soul; for we are naturally disposed to seek, and to believe that we discover, in the features of a man, what we know to be in his heart.

Belzors, whose nature had been directed to virtue from his infancy, enjoyed the inestimable advantage of being able

to give himself up to it without precaution and constraint. Decency, honesty, candour, the frankness which gains confidence, and the strictness of morals which creates respect, had acquired in him the easy freedom of habit. An enemy to vice, without ostentation; indulgent to follies, without contracting any; complying with innocent customs, incorruptible by bad examples, he swam upon the torrent of the world: beloved, respected even by those to whom his life was a reproach, and to whom the public esteem delighted to oppose it, in order to humble their pride.

Madame du Troëne, charmed with the character of this young man, had secretly pitched upon him as the most deserving husband she could give her daughter. She was inexhaustible in his commendations; and while Emily applauded with the modesty of her age, Madame du Troëne mistook the ingenuous and agreeable air which her daughter assumed towards him: for as the esteem with which Belzors inspired her was not mingled with any sentiment that she needed to conceal, Emily was quite at her ease.

It were to be wished, that she had been as unconstrained and as tranquil with the dangerous Verglan; though the painful situation into which his presence cast her, had some appearance of spleen. If Madame du Troëne spoke in commendation of him, Emily looked down, and kept silence. "You do not seem to me, daughter," said Madame du Troëne, "to relish those light and shining graces on which the world lays so much stress."—"I am no judge of them," said Emily, blushing. The good mother concealed her joy: she thought she saw the plain and modest virtues of Belzors triumphing in Emily's heart over the little pleasant vices of Verglan, and those like him; till an accident, slight in appearance, but striking to an attentive and discerning mother, drew her out of this illusion.

One of Emily's accomplishments was drawing. She had chosen the delineation of flowers, as the most suitable to her age: for what can be more natural than to see a rose blow

beneath the hand of beauty! Verglan, with a taste resembling hers, was passionately fond of flowers: and he never appeared without a nosegay, the prettiest in the world.

One day Madame du Troëne's eyes were thrown casually on Verglan's nosegay. The day after, she perceived that Emily, perhaps without thinking what she was doing, was drawing the flowers of it. It was natural enough, that the flowers she had seen the evening before should be still present to her imagination, and should come, as it were, of their own accord, to offer themselves to her pencil: but that which was not quite so natural, was the air of enthusiasm which she betrayed in drawing them. Her eyes sparkled with the fire of genius; her mouth smiled amorously at every stroke of the pencil, and a colour more animated than that of the flowers which she was endeavouring to delineate, diffused itself over her cheeks. "Are you pleased with your sitting?" said the mother to her carelessly. "It is impossible," replied Emily, "to represent Nature well, when we have her not before our eyes." It was certain, however, that she had never copied her more faithfully.

Some few days after, Verglan came again with new flowers. Madame du Troëne, without any particularity, observed them, one after another; and, in Emily's next lesson, Verglan's nosegay was drawn again. The good mother continued her observations, and every trial, confirming her suspicions, redoubled her uneasiness. "After all," said she, "I am perhaps alarming myself at something very innocent. Let me see, however, if she means mischief."

The studies and accomplishments of Emily were a secret to her mother's acquaintance. As she had only intended to procure her agreeable leisure, to make her relish solitude, to preserve her imagination from the dangers of reverie, and her active and tender soul from the tediousness of idleness, Madame du Troëne drew neither for herself nor her daughter the least vanity from those talents which she had cultivated with so

much care. But one day when they were alone with Belzors, and the conversation turned on the great advantage of employing and amusing one's self, " My daughter," said Madame du Troëne, "has made herself an amusement, which she relishes more and more. I want you to see some of her designs." Emily opened her portfolio ; and Belzors, charmed, was never weary of admiring her performances. " How soft and pure," said he, " are the pleasures of innocence ! In vain does vice torment itself, it will never taste the like. Confess, Mademoiselle, that the hour of labour passes away quick ? And yet you have fixed it : see it here retraced and produced anew to your eyes. Time is never lost but to the idle." Madame du Troëne listened with a secret complacency. Emily thought his observations very sensible, but was not in the least touched by them.

Some days after, Verglan came to see them. " Do you know, sir," says Madame du Troëne, " that my daughter has received the highest encomiums from Belzors on her talent for drawing ? I want your opinion of it." Emily, in confusion, blushed, hesitated, said that she had nothing finished by her, and besought her mother to wait till she should have some piece fit to be seen. She did not doubt but her mother was laying a snare for her. " Since there is a mystery in this, there is also a design," said this discerning mother to herself : " she is afraid that Verglan may know his own flowers, and penetrate into the secret motive of the pleasure which she has taken in drawing them. My daughter loves this young featherhead ; my fears were but too well founded."

Madame du Troëne, solicited on all sides, excused herself still on account of Emily's youth, and the resolution she had taken not to constrain her in her choice. However, this choice alarmed her. " My daughter," said she, " is about to prefer Verglan : there is at least room to think so ; and this young man has every quality that can render a woman unhappy. If I declare my will to Emily, if I only suffer her to have the

slightest perception of it, she will make it a law to subscribe to it, without murmuring: she will marry a man whom she does not love, and the remembrance of the man she loves will haunt her even in the arms of another. I know her soul; she will become the victim of her duty. But shall I ordain this grievous sacrifice? God forbid! No: let her own inclination decide it: but I may direct her inclination by enlightening it, and that is the only lawful use of the authority that is given me. I am certain of the goodness of heart, of the justness of my daughter's sentiments; let me supply, by the light natural to my years, the inexperience of hers; let her see by her mother's eyes, and fancy, if possible, that she consults only her own inclination."

Every time that Verglan and Belzors met together at Madame du Troëne's, she turned the conversation on the manners, customs, and maxims of the world. She encouraged contradiction; and, without taking any side, gave their dispositions room to display themselves. Those little adventures with which society abounds, and which entertain the idle curiosity of the circles at Paris, most commonly furnished matter for their reflections. Verglan, light, decisive, and lively, was constantly on the side of the fashion. Belzors, in a modester tone, constantly defended the cause of morality with a noble freedom.

The arrangement of Count d'Auberive with his lady was at that time the town-talk. It was said, that after a pretty brisk quarrel, and bitter complaints on both sides, on the subject of their mutual infidelity, they had agreed, that they owed each other nothing; that they had concluded by laughing at the folly of being jealous without loving; that d'Auberive had consented to meet the Chevalier de Clange, his wife's lover; and that she had promised, on her side, to receive with the greatest politeness the Marchioness de Talbe, to whom d'Auberive paid his court; that the peace had been ratified by a supper, and that never had two couple of lovers maintained a better understanding.

At this recital Verglan cried out, that nothing was wiser. "They talk of the good old times," said he; "let them produce an instance of the manners of our forefathers comparable to this. Formerly an instance of infidelity set a family in flames; they shut up, they beat their wives. If the husband made use of the liberty that was reserved to him, his sad and faithful half was obliged to put up with the injury, and vent her moans at home, as in an obscure prison. If she imitated her truant husband, it was at terrible risks. Nothing less than her lover's and her own life was at stake. They had the folly to attach the honour of the man to the virtue of his wife; and the husband, who was not the less a fine gentleman for intriguing elsewhere himself, became the ridiculous object of public contempt on the first false step of his lady. Upon honour, I do not conceive how, in these barbarous ages, they had the courage to marry. The bands of Hymen were then downright chains. Nowadays, complaisance, freedom, peace, reign in the bosom of families. If the married pair love one another, so much the better; they live together, they are happy. If they cease to love, they say so like well-bred persons, and dispense with each other's promises of fidelity. They give over being lovers, and become friends. These are what I call social manners, free and easy. This makes one long to be married."—"You find it then quite easy," said Madame du Troëne, "for a wife to be the confidante of her husband, and for him to be the complaisant friend of his wife?"—"To be sure, provided it be mutual. Is it not just to grant our confidence to those who honour us with theirs, and to render each other by turns the offices of friendship? Can a man have a better friend than his wife, or the wife a surer and more intimate friend than her husband? With whom shall we be open, if not with the person who is officially one with us? And when unfortunately we no longer find pleasure at home, what can be better than to seek it abroad, and to bring it back, each for themselves, without jealousy and restraint."

"Nothing is more pleasant," said Belzors, "than this new method; but you and I have a great deal of ground to go over before we can sincerely relish it. In the first place, a man must give up all respect for himself, his wife, and his children: he must be able to accustom himself to consider, without repugnance, as but a half self, somebody whom he despises sufficiently to deliver up. . . ." — "Well," replied Verglan, "what mere prejudices are all these scruples! what hinders us from esteeming one another, if it be settled that there is no longer any scandal in all this?"—"When that is settled," said Belzors, "all the bonds of society are broken. The inviolable sanctity of the marriage tie forms the sanctity of all the ties of nature. Remember, my friend, that if there are no longer any sacred duties for the parents, there will no longer be any for the children. All these connections depend on each other. Family quarrels were violent in the days of our fathers; but the mass of morals was sound, and the wound soon closed up again. At present it is a languishing body, wasting by a slow poison. Believe me, my dear Verglan, we have now no idea of those pure and intimate pleasures which the married pair felt amidst their family; nor of that union which formed the delight of their youth, and the consolation of their advanced years. Nowadays, when a mother is afflicted at the dissipations of her son, or a father overwhelmed with any reverse of fortune, are they a refuge or support to each other? They are obliged to unbosom their grief abroad: and the consolation of strangers is very weak indeed."

"You talk like an oracle, my sage Belzors," said Verglan; "but who has told you that two married persons would not do best to love, and to be faithful to each other all their lives? I am only, if unfortunately this mutual liking should cease, for their consoling each other, and settling matters amicably, without forbidding those who would have loved each other in the times of our fathers, to love still, if their heart inclines them to it."—"Ay," said Madame du Troëne, "what is there

to hinder them?"—"What is there to hinder them, madam?" replied Belzors. "Custom, example, the *bon ton*, the facility of living, without shame, according to their liking. Verglan will agree, that the life led in the world is agreeable: and change is naturally pleasing: our very weakness invites us to it. Who then will resist this inclination, if the curb of morality is taken off?"—"For my part, I take off nothing," said Verglan; "but I am for everybody's living according to their liking, and I very much approve of the course that d'Auberive and his lady have taken, that of overlooking on both sides what are called injuries. If they are satisfied, everybody else ought to be so too."

As he finished these last words, a servant announced the Marquis d'Auberive. "Ah! Marquis, you come very opportunely," said Verglan: "tell us, prithee, if your story be true. They say that your lady permits you your rhubarb, and that you allow her senna."—"Psha! what stuff!" said d'Auberive to him carelessly.—"I have maintained that nothing was more reasonable; but Belzors there condemns you without appeal."—"Why so, pray? Would not he have done as much? My wife is young and handsome; a coquette; that is quite evident. At the bottom, however, I believe her to be very virtuous; but though she should err a little, justice ought to be done. I conceive, however, that a person more jealous than myself may condemn me; but what astonishes me is, that Belzors should be the first. I have hitherto received nothing but commendations. Nothing is more natural than my proceedings; and all the world felicitate me upon it as on something marvellous. It looks as if they did not think I had understanding enough to take a reasonable step. Upon honour, I am quite confounded at the compliments I receive on it. As to the rigid gentlemen, I honour them sufficiently; but I live for myself. Let every one do as much, and the happiest will always be the wisest."—"Well, how is the Marchioness?" said Madame du Troëne to him, with a design

of changing the subject.—"Wonderfully well, madam; we supped together last night, and I never saw her in such good humour."—"I will lay a wager," says Verglan, "that you will take her again some day."—"Faith, very possibly: for but yesterday, when we got up from table, I caught myself saying tender things to her."

This first trial made the most lively impression on Emily's understanding. Her mother, who perceived it, gave free course to her reflections; but in order to put her into the way, "It is wonderful," said she, "how much opinions depend upon characters. Here are these two young men, educated with the same care, both imbued with the same principles of honesty and virtue; observe, however, how they differ from one another! and each of them believes he is in the right." Emily's heart did its best to excuse in Verglan the fault of having defended the manners of the age. "With what levity," said she, "do they treat modesty and fidelity! how they sport with what is most sacred in nature! and Verglan falls into these irregularities! Why has he not the soul of Belzors?"

Some time after, Emily and her mother being at the play, Belzors and Verglan presented themselves at their box, and Madame du Troëne invited them both to take their seats there. The play was *Inès.*[1] The scene of the children gave Verglan an opportunity of uttering some *bons mots,* which he put off as sound criticisms. Belzors, without listening to him, melted into tears, and took no pains to conceal it. His rival rallied him on his weakness. "What," said he to him, "do children make you cry?"—"And what would you have me be affected by?" said Belzors. "Yes, I confess, I never hear without a shudder of affection the tender names of father and mother; the pathos of nature penetrates me: even the most touching love interests me, moves me much less." *Inès* was followed by *Nanine;*[2] and when they came to the catastrophe,

[1] *Inès de Castro,* from which Mallet's *Elvira* is taken.

[2] A petit piece of Voltaire; the story somewhat like *Pamela.*

"Oh!" said Verglan, "that is carrying the jest too far: let Dolban love this little wench, with all my heart: but to marry her, I think, is rather too much."—"It is a folly, perhaps," replied Belzors; "but I feel myself capable of it: when virtue and beauty are united, I can't answer for my discretion." Not one of their observations escaped Madame du Troëne; Emily, still more attentive, blushed at the advantage which Belzors had over his rival. After the play, they saw the Chevalier d'Olcet pass by in weepers. "What is the meaning of this, Chevalier?" said Verglan to him, with an air of gaiety.—"An old uncle," replies d'Olcet, "who has been so kind as to leave me ten thousand crowns a year."—"Ten thousand crowns! I give you joy. This uncle was a fine old fellow. Ten thousand crowns! charming." Belzors, embracing him in his turn, said to him: "Chevalier, I condole with you on his death: I know that you think too justly to conceive any unnatural joy on the occasion."—"He has long been as a father to me," said the Chevalier, confounded at the pleasant air he had assumed; "but he was so old, you know!"—"That is a cause for patience," replied Belzors mildly; "but not for consolation. A good relation is the best of friends; and the riches he has left you would not buy such a one."—"An old uncle is but a dull kind of friend," said Verglan; "and it is a rule that every one must live in his turn. Young folks would be much to be pitied, if old fellows were immortal." Belzors changed the discourse, in order to spare Verglan an humiliating reply. At every stroke of this contrast, Emily's heart was cruelly torn. Madame du Troëne saw with joy the air of esteem and sympathy she assumed towards Belzors, and the cold and chagrined air with which she replied to Verglan's compliments; but in order to bring about another trial, she invited them both to supper.

They played at cards. Verglan and Belzors had a *tête-à-tête* at trictrac. Verglan liked nothing but high play; Belzors would play anything you pleased. The party was interesting.

Mademoiselle du Troëne was of the number of lookers-on; and the good mother, while playing whist herself, kept an eye upon her daughter, to read in her countenance what passed in her heart. Fortune favoured Belzors; Emily, displeased as she was with Verglan, had too good a heart not to suffer on seeing him engaged in a serious loss. The young coxcomb could no longer contain himself; he grew angry, he doubled the stakes, and, before supper, he was on the point of playing upon honour. Ill-humour had seized him; he did his utmost to be merry; but the alteration of his countenance banished all joy. He perceived himself that they pitied him, and that they did not laugh at some pleasantries he endeavoured to throw out: he was humbled, and would have lost his temper, if they had not quitted the table. Belzors, whom neither his own good luck, nor the chagrin of his rival, had moved, was easy and modest, according to custom. They sat down again to play. Madame du Troëne, who had finished her own party, came to look on at this, extremely uneasy at the issue it might have, but desirous that it might make its impression on the soul of Emily. The success exceeded her expectation: Verglan lost continuously: his trembling hand and pale countenance expressed the trouble he wanted to conceal. Belzors, with an unbounded complaisance, gave him as many opportunities of revenging himself as he thought proper; and when, by doubling stakes, he had suffered Verglan to get off for a reasonable sum, "If you please," said he, "we will stop here: I think I may fairly win as much as I was prepared to lose." So much moderation and discretion excited a murmur of applause in the company. Verglan alone appeared insensible to it, and said, on getting up, with an air of disdain, "It was not worth the trouble of playing so long for."

Emily did not sleep that night, so violently was her soul agitated with what she had just seen and heard. "What a difference!" said she; "and by what caprice is it that I must

sigh at having been enlightened? Ought not the seduction to cease, as soon as we perceive that we are seduced? I admire one, and love the other. What is this misunderstanding between the heart and the reason, which makes us still hold dear that which we cease to esteem?"

In the morning, she appeared, according to custom, at her mother's bedside. "You seem strangely altered," said Madame du Troëne.—"Yes, mother, I am very much so."—"What, have not you slept well?"—"Very little," said she, with a sigh.—"You must endeavour, however, to look handsome; for I am going to take you this evening to the Tuileries, where all Paris is to be assembled. I used to lament that the finest garden in the world was abandoned: I am very glad it has come into fashion again."

Verglan failed not to repair there, and Madame du Troëne kept him with her. The view of this walk had an air of enchantment. A thousand beauties, in all the splendour of brilliant dress, were seated round the basin, the circuit of which is adorned with sculpture. The superb walk which this basin crowns, was filled with young nymphs, who by their charms and accomplishments attracted desire after their steps. Verglan knew them all, and smiled upon them, following them with his eyes. "Yonder," said he, "is Fatimé. No one is more tender and impassioned; she lives like an angel with Cleon: he has given her twenty thousand crowns in six months; they love like two turtles. There is the celebrated Corinna: her house is the temple of luxury; her suppers the most brilliant in Paris; she does the honours of them with a grace that bewitches us. Do you see that fair beauty who looks so modest, and whose glances wander languishingly on every side? She has three lovers, each of whom flatters himself that he alone is the happy man. It is a pleasure to see her amidst her adorers, distributing slight favours to each, and persuading each in his turn that she jilts his rival. She is a model of coquetry, and nobody deceives people with so much address

and sprightliness. On my word she will go a great way, and I have told her so."—"You are in her confidence then?" said Madame du Troëne.—"Oh yes, they don't dissemble with me: they know me; they know very well that they cannot impose upon me."—"And you, Belzors," said Madame du Troëne to the sensible and virtuous young man, who had joined them, "are you initiated in these mysteries?"—"No, madam: I can believe that it is all very amusing; but the charm makes the danger." Madame du Troëne observed that the modest women received, with a cold and reserved air, the smiling and familiar salute of Verglan, while they returned with an air of esteem and friendship the respectful salutation of Belzors. She rallied Verglan on this distinction, in order to make Emily perceive it. "It is true," said he, "madam, that they behave rigidly to me in public; but *tête-à-tête*, they make me amends for it."

On her return home with them, she received a visit from Eleonora, a young widow of uncommon beauty. Eleonora spoke of the misfortune she had sustained in losing a deserving husband; she spoke of it with so much sensibility, candour, and grace, that Madame du Troëne, Emily, and Belzors listened to her with tears in their eyes. "To a young, handsome woman," said Verglan, in a gay tone, "a husband is a trifling loss, and easy to be repaired."—"Not to me, sir," replied the tender and modest Eleonora: "a husband who honoured a wife of my age with his esteem and his confidence, and whose delicate love never was tainted either by fears or jealousy, or the negligences of familiarity, is not one of those whom we can easily replace."—"He had, I take it for granted, a fine person?" said Verglan.—"No, sir, but his soul was beautiful."—"A beautiful soul," replied Verglan, with a disdainful air, "a beautiful soul! He was young at least?"—"Not at all; he was of the age of reason for the reasonable."—"But if he was neither young nor handsome, I don't see why you should afflict yourself. Confidence, esteem, handsome treatment, fall as a matter of course to an amiable

woman: nothing of that kind could be wanting to you. Believe me, madam, the essential point is to suit yourself, as to age and figure, to unite the Graces with the Loves,—in one word, to marry a handsome man, or to preserve your liberty." —"Your advice is extremely gallant," replied Eleonora, "but unfortunately it is misplaced."

"There is a pretty prude!" said Verglan, as soon as she was gone.—"Prudery, sir," replied Madame du Troëne, "is an exaggerated copy of prudence and reason; and I see nothing in Eleonora but what is plain and natural."—"For my part," said Belzors, "I think her as admirable as she is handsome." —"Respect her, sir, respect her," resumed Verglan, with vivacity: "who hinders you? She is the only person can take it ill."—"Do you know," interrupted Madame du Troëne, "who could console Eleonora? Such a man as Belzors: and if I were the confidante that he consulted on his choice, I would persuade him to think of her."—"You do me great honour, madam," said Belzors, colouring; "but Eleonora deserves a heart that is disengaged, and unhappily mine is not so."

With these words he took his leave, quite confounded at the dismissal which he thought he had received. "For in fact, said he, "to invite me herself to pay my addresses to Eleonora, is not this giving me notice to renounce Emily? Alas! how little she knows my heart!" Verglan, who took it in the same sense, affected to commiserate his rival. He spoke of him as one of the best fellows in the world. "It is pity he is so gloomy," said he, in a tone of compassion: "That is all people get by their virtue; they grow tiresome, and are dismissed." Madame du Troëne, without explaining herself, assured him that she had not intended saying anything disobliging to a man for whom she had a most particular esteem and regard. In the meantime Emily sat with downcast eyes, and her blushes betrayed the agitation of her soul.

Verglan, not doubting but this confusion was an emotion

of joy, retired in triumph, and the day following wrote her a billet conceived in these terms. "You must have thought me very romantic, beautiful Emily, in having so long spoken to you only with my eyes! Do not accuse me of an unjust diffidence: I have read your heart, and if I had only that to consult, I should be very sure of its answer. But you depend on a mother, and mothers have their caprices. Happily your mother loves you, and her affection has enlightened her choice. The dismissal of Belzors apprizes me that she has determined; but your consent ought to precede hers: I wait it with the most tender impatience, and the most violent love." Emily opened this billet without knowing whence it came: she was as much offended as surprised at it, and without hesitation communicated it to her mother. "I take very kindly of you," said Madame du Troëne, "this mark of your friendship; but I owe you in my turn confidence for confidence. Belzors has written to me; read his letter." Emily obeyed and read: "Madam, I honour virtue, I admire beauty, I do justice to Eleonora: but has heaven favoured only her? And after having adored, in your image, everything that heaven has made most affecting, do you think me in a condition to follow the counsel which you have given me? I will not tell you how cruel it is; my respect stifles my complaints. If I have not the name, I have at least the sentiments of your son, and that character cannot be effaced."

Emily could not finish this without the most lively emotion. Her mother pretended not to perceive it, and said to her, "Well, child, *I* indeed must answer these two rivals; but *you* must dictate my answers."—"I, madam?"—"Who else! Is it I whom they demand in marriage? Is it my heart that I am to consult?"—"Ah! madam, is not your will mine? Have not you the right to dispose of me?"—"You are very good, my dear; but as your own happiness is concerned, it is just that you should decide on it. These young men are both well-born; their condition and fortunes are nearly the same:

think which comes nearest to the idea you have formed of a good husband. Let us keep him, and dismiss the other."



"Well," said the good mother, "to which of the two are we to return an answer?"

Emily, with heartfelt gratitude, kissed her mother's hands, and bathed them with her tears. "Complete your goodness," said

she to her, "by enlightening me in my choice: the more important it is, the more need have I for your advice to determine it. The husband whom my mother shall choose for me will be dear to me; my heart dares promise that."—"No, my dear, there is no loving out of mere duty, and you know better than myself the man who is likely to make you happy. If you are not so, I will console you: I would readily share your sorrows, but I would not be the cause of them. Come, I take pen in hand, I am going to write; you need but dictate." Imagine the trouble, the confusion, the emotion of Emily! Trembling by the side of this tender mother, one hand on her eyes and the other on her heart, she essayed in vain to obey her; her voice expired on her lips. "Well," said the good mother, "to which of the two are we to return an answer? Make an end, or I shall grow impatient."—"To Verglan," said Emily, with a feeble and faltering voice.—"To Verglan, be it so; what shall I say to him?"

"It is impossible, sir, that a man, so necessary to society as yourself, should renounce it to live in the bosom of his family. My Emily has not qualities sufficient to indemnify you for the sacrifices which she would require. Continue to embellish the world; it is for that you are made."—"Is this all?"—"Yes, madam."—"And Belzors, what shall we say to him?" Emily continued to dictate with somewhat more confidence. "To deem you worthy of a woman as virtuous as she is handsome, was not, sir, to forbid you to make a choice which interests me as much as it does me honour; it was even to encourage you. Your modesty has allowed itself to be deluded, and you have been unjust both to yourself and to me. Come, and learn to judge better of the intentions of a good mother. I dispose of the heart of my daughter, and I esteem none in the world more than yourself."

"Come hither, my child, that I may embrace you," cried Madame du Troëne; "you fulfil the wishes of your mother, and you could not have said better, if you had consulted my heart.

Belzors hastened to them quite beside himself with joy. Never was marriage more applauded, more fortunate than this. Belzors' affection was divided between Emily and her mother, and it was a moot point among the world, which of the two he loved most.

Notes to "THE GOOD MOTHER"

P. 124.—*Inès = Inès de Castro.*

La Motte's famous tragedy, which first appeared in 1723, and was one of the greatest successes of the century in France.

P. 126.—*Tri,*

which I have here rendered "whist," is sometimes used for that game (especially for making the odd trick at it), and sometimes for a three-handed game, a kind of ombre.



IN the mountains of Savoy, not far from the road from Briançon to Modane, is a solitary valley, the sight of which inspires travellers with a pleasing melancholy. Three little hills forming an amphitheatre, on which are scattered, at a great distance from each other, some shepherds' huts, torrents that fall from the mountains, clumps of trees here and there, pastures always green, form the ornament of this rural place.

The Marchioness of Fonrose was returning from France to Italy with her husband. The axle-tree of their carriage broke; and as the day was on the decline, they were obliged to seek in this valley for some shelter to pass the night. As they advanced towards one of the huts, they saw a flock going that way, conducted by a shepherdess whose gait astonished them. They drew nearer, and heard a heavenly voice, whose plaintive and moving accents made the echoes groan.

"How softly glitters the light of the setting sun! It is thus," said she, "that at the end of a painful career, the exhausted soul departs to renew its youth in the pure source

of immortality. But alas, how distant is the period, and how long is life!" Saying these words, the shepherdess retired with her head bent; but the negligence of her attitude seemed to give still more nobleness and majesty to her person and deportment.

Struck with what they saw, and still more with what they had just heard, the Marquis and Marchioness of Fonrose redoubled their pace, in order to overtake this shepherdess whom they admired. But what was their surprise, when under the plainest head-dress, beneath the most humble garb, they saw all the graces, all the beauties united! "Child," said the Marchioness to her, seeing that she avoided them, "fear nothing; we are travellers whom an accident obliges to seek shelter in these huts till to-morrow: will you be so good as to be our guide?"—"I pity you, madam," said the shepherdess to her, looking down and blushing: "these huts are inhabited by poor wretches, and you will be very ill lodged."—"You lodge there without doubt yourself," replied the Marchioness; "and I can easily endure, for one night, the inconveniences which you suffer always."—"I was born to that," said the shepherdess, with a modesty that charmed them.—"No, surely," said the Marquis de Fonrose, who could no longer dissemble the emotion she had caused in him; "no, you are not made to suffer; and Fortune is very unjust! Is it possible, lovely damsel, that so many charms should be buried in this desert, under that dress?"—"Fortune, sir," replied Adelaide (this was the name of the shepherdess), "Fortune is only cruel when she takes from us that which she has given. My condition has its pleasures for one who knows no other, and custom creates wants for you, which shepherds do not know."—"That may be," said the Marquis, "with respect to those whom heaven has placed from their birth in this obscure condition; but you, astonishing damsel, you whom I admire, you who enchant me, *you* were never born what you now are; that air, that gait, that voice, that language, everything betrays you. The few words which

you have just now spoken, proclaim a cultivated understanding, a noble soul. Proceed, teach us what misfortune can have reduced you to this strange abasement."—"For a man in misfortune," replied Adelaide, "there are a thousand ways to extricate himself; for a woman, you know, there is no other honest resource than servitude, and in the choice of masters they do well, in my opinion, who prefer the good. You are now about to see mine; you will be charmed with the innocence of their lives, the candour, the simplicity, the probity of their manners."

While she talked thus, they arrived at the hut. It was separated by a partition from the fold into which this *incognita* drove her sheep, telling them over with the most serious attention, and not deigning to take any further notice of the travellers, who contemplated her. An old man and his wife, such as Philemon and Baucis are described to us, came forth to meet their guests with that village politeness, which recalls the golden age to our minds. "We have nothing to offer you," said the good woman, "but fresh straw for a bed, milk, fruit, and rye-bread for your food; but the little that heaven gives us, we will most heartily share with you." The travellers, on entering the hut, were surprised at the air of order which everything breathed there. The table was one single plank of walnut-tree highly polished: they saw themselves in the enamel of the earthen vessels designed for the milk. Everything presented the image of cheerful poverty and of the first wants of nature agreeably satisfied.

"It is our dear daughter," said the good woman, "who takes upon her the management of our house. In the morning, before her flock ramble far into the country, and while they begin to graze round the house on the grass covered with dew, she washes, cleans, and sets everything in order with a dexterity that charms us."—"What!" said the Marchioness, "is this shepherdess your daughter?"—"Ah! madam, would to heaven she were!" cried the good old

woman; "it is my heart that calls her so, for I have a mother's love for her; but I am not so happy as to have borne her; we are not worthy to have given her birth."—"Who is she then? Whence comes she? and what misfortune has reduced her to such a condition?"—"All that is unknown to us. It is now four years since she came in the habit of a female peasant to offer herself to keep our flocks; we would have taken her for nothing, so much had her good looks and pleasing manner won upon our hearts. We doubted her being born a villager; but our questions afflicted her, and we thought it our duty to abstain from them. This respect has but augmented in proportion as we have become better acquainted with her soul; but the more we would humble ourselves to her, the more she humbles herself to us. Never had daughter more attention, nor more tender officiousness for her father and mother. She cannot obey us, because we take good care not to command her; but it seems as if she saw through us, and everything that we can wish is done, before we perceive that she thinks of it. She is an angel come down among us to comfort our old age."

"And what is she doing now in the fold?" demanded the Marchioness. "Giving the flock fresh litter; milking the ewes and she-goats. This milk, pressed out by her hand, seems to become the more delicate for it. I who go and sell it in the town cannot serve it fast enough. They think it delicious. The dear child employs herself, while she is watching the flock, in works of straw and osier, which are admired by all. I would you could see how deftly she plaits the supple reed. Everything becomes valuable beneath her fingers. You see, madam," continued the good old woman, "you see here the image of an easy and quiet life: it is she who procures it to us. This heavenly girl is never employed but to make us happy."—"Is she happy herself?" demanded the Marquis de Fonrose.—"She endeavours to persuade us so," replied the old man; "but I have frequently observed to my wife, that at

her return from the pasture she has her eyes bedewed with tears, and the most afflicted air in the world. The moment she sees us, she affects to smile: but we see plainly that she has some grief that consumes her. We dare not ask her what it is."

"Ah! madam," said the old woman, "how I suffer for this child, when she persists in leading out her flocks to pasture in spite of rain and frost! many a time have I thrown myself on my knees, in order to prevail with her to let me go in her stead; but I never could prevail on her. She goes out at sunrise; and returns in the evening benumbed with cold. 'Judge now,' says she to me, 'whether I would suffer you to quit your fireside, and expose yourself at your age to the rigours of the season. I am scarce able to withstand it myself.' Nevertheless, she brings home under her arm the wood with which we warm ourselves; and when I complain of the fatigue she gives herself, 'Have done, have done, my good mother, it is by exercise that I keep myself from cold: labour is made for my age.' In short, madam, she is as good as she is handsome, and my husband and I never speak of her, but with tears in our eyes."—"And if she should be taken from you?" said the Marchioness.—"We should lose," interrupted the old man, "all that we hold dearest in the world; but if she herself was to be the happier for it, we would die happy in that consolation."—"Oh! ay," replied the old woman, shedding tears, "heaven grant her a fortune worthy of her, if it be possible! It was my hope, that that hand, so dear to me, would have closed my eyes, for I love her more than my life." Her arrival broke off their discourse.

She appeared with a pail of milk in one hand, a basket of fruit in the other: and after saluting them with bewitching grace, she directed her attention to household cares, as if nobody was watching her. "You give yourself a great deal of trouble, my dear child," said the Marchioness.—"I endeavour, madam," replied she, "to fulfil the intention of those

I serve, who are desirous of entertaining you in the best manner they are able. You will have," continued she, spreading over the table a coarse, but very white cloth, "you will have a frugal and rural repast: this bread is not the whitest in the world, but it tastes pretty well; the eggs are fresh, the milk is good, and the fruits, which I have just now gathered, are such as the season affords." The diligence, the attention, the noble and becoming grace with which this wonderful shepherdess paid them all the duties of hospitality, the respect she showed for her master and mistress, whether she spoke to them, or whether she sought to read in their eyes what they wanted her to do—all these things filled the Marquis and Marchioness of Fonrose with astonishment and admiration. As soon as they had lain down on the bed of fresh straw which the shepherdess had prepared for them herself, "Our adventure has the air of a prodigy," said they one to another; "we must clear up this mystery; we must carry away this child along with us."

At break of day, one of the men, who had been up all night getting their carriage mended, came to inform them that it was thoroughly repaired. Madame de Fonrose, before she set out, ordered the shepherdess to be called to her. "I do not want to pry," said she, "into the secret of your birth, and the cause of your misfortune. But all that I see, all that I hear, interests me in your favour. I see that your spirit has raised you above ill fortune; and that you have suited your sentiments to your present condition: your charms and your virtues make it respectable, but yet it is unworthy of you. I have it in my power, amiable stranger, to procure you a happier lot; my husband's intentions agree entirely with mine. I keep a considerable establishment at Turin: I want a friend of my own sex, and I shall think I bear away from this place an invaluable treasure, if you will accompany me. Discard from the proposal, from the suit I now make you, all notion of servitude: I do not think you made for that

condition; but though my prepossessions in your favour should deceive me, I had rather raise you above your birth, than leave you beneath it. I repeat to you, it is a friend of my own sex that I want to attach to me. For the rest, be under no concern for the fate of these good people: there is nothing which I would not do to make them amends for your loss; at least they shall have wherewith to spend the remainder of their lives happily, according to their condition; and it is from your hand that they shall receive the benefits I intend them." The old folks, who were present at this discourse, kissing the hands of the Marchioness and throwing themselves at her feet, begged the young *incognita* to accept of these generous offers: they represented to her, with tears, that they were on the brink of the grave; that she could not do more for them than to make them happy in their old age; and that at their death, when left to herself, their habitation would become for her a dreadful solitude. The shepherdess, embracing them, mingled her tears with theirs; she returned thanks to the Marquis and Marchioness of Fonrose for their goodness, with a feeling that made her still more beautiful. "I cannot," said she, "accept of your courtesies. Heaven has marked out my place, and its will is accomplished; but your goodness has made impressions on my soul which will never be effaced. The venerated name of Fonrose shall ever be present to my imagination. I have but one favour more to ask you," said she, blushing, and looking down; "that is, to be so good as to bury this adventure in eternal silence, and to leave the world for ever ignorant of the lot of an unknown wretch, who wants to live and die in oblivion." The Marquis and Marchioness of Fonrose, moved with pity and grief, redoubled their instances a thousand times: she was immovable, and the old people, the travellers, and the shepherdess, separated with tears in their eyes.

During the journey the Marquis and his lady were taken up with nothing but this adventure. They thought they had

been in a dream. They arrived at Turin, their imaginations still filled with this kind of romance. It may easily be imagined that they did not keep silence, and the subject was an inexhaustible one for reflections and conjectures. Young Fonrose, who was present at these discourses, lost not one circumstance. He was at that age wherein the imagination is most lively, and the heart most susceptible; but he was one of those characters whose sensibility displays not itself outwardly, and who are so much the more violently agitated, when they are so at all, in proportion as the sentiment which affects them does not weaken itself by any sort of public display. All that Fonrose heard said of the charms, virtues, and misfortunes of the shepherdess of Savoy, kindled in his soul the most ardent desire of seeing her. He formed to himself an image of her, which was always present to him. He compared her to everything that he saw, and everything that he saw was naught before her. But the more his impatience redoubled, the more care he took to conceal it. Turin became odious to him. The valley which concealed from the world its brightest ornament, attracted his whole soul. It was there that happiness awaited him. But if his project was known, he foresaw the greatest obstacles: they would never consent to the journey he meditated; it was the folly of a young man, the consequences of which they would fear; the shepherdess herself, affrighted at his pursuits, would not fail to withdraw herself from them; he would lose her if he should be known. After all these reflections, which employed his thoughts for three months, he took a resolution to quit everything for her sake; to go under the habit of a shepherd, to seek her in her solitude, and to die there, or draw her out of it.

He disappeared; they saw him no more. His parents became alarmed at his absence: their fear increased every day: their disappointed expectations threw the whole family into affliction: the fruitlessness of their inquiries completed

their despair; a duel, an assassination, every kind of misfortune presented itself to their imagination; and these unhappy parents ended their researches by lamenting the death of their son, their only hope. While his family were in mourning, Fonrose, under the habit of a shepherd, presented himself to the inhabitants of the hamlets adjoining to the valley, which they had but too well described to him. His ambition was accomplished: they trusted him with the care of their flocks.

The first days after his arrival, he left them to wander at random, solely attentive to discover the places to which the shepherdess led hers.

"Let us humour," said he, "the timidity of this solitary fair one: if she is unfortunate, her heart has need of consolation; if it be nothing but a desire to banish herself from the world, and the pleasure of a tranquil and innocent life, that retains her here, she will feel some dull moments, and wish for company to amuse or console her. If I succeed so far as to render that agreeable to her, she will soon find it necessary: then I shall take counsel from the state of her soul. After all, we are here alone, as it were, in the world, and we shall be everything to each other. From confidence to friendship the passage is not long, and from friendship to love, at our age, the road is still easier." And what was Fonrose's age when he reasoned thus? Fonrose was eighteen; but three months' reflection on the same object unfolds a number of ideas!

While he was thus giving himself up to his imagination, with his eyes wandering over the country, he heard at a distance that voice, the charms of which had been so often extolled to him. The emotion it excited in him was as lively as if it had been unexpected.—"It is here," said the shepherdess in her plaintive strains, "it is here that my heart enjoys the only happiness that remains to it. My grief has a luxury in it for my soul; I prefer its bitterness to the deceitful sweets of joy." These accents rent the feeling heart of Fonrose. "What," said he, "can be the cause of the chagrin that consumes her?

How pleasing would it be to console her!" A hope still more pleasing hardly dared to flatter his desires. He feared to alarm the shepherdess if he imprudently indulged his impatience to see her close, and on the first occasion it was sufficient to have heard her.

The next day he went out again to lead his sheep to pasture; and after observing the route which she had taken, he placed himself at the foot of a rock, which the day before had repeated to him the sounds of that touching voice. I forgot to mention that Fonrose united to an extremely attractive appearance those talents which the young nobility of Italy do not neglect. He played on the hautboy like Besuzzi, of whom he had taken his lessons, and who was at that time the delight of Europe. Adelaide, buried in her own afflicting ideas, had not yet made her voice heard, and the echoes kept silence. All on a sudden this silence was interrupted by the plaintive tones of Fonrose's hautboy. These unknown sounds excited in the soul of Adelaide surprise mingled with anxiety. The keepers of the flocks that wandered on the hills had never made her hear aught before but the sounds of rustic pipes. Immovable and attentive, she looked to see who it was that could form such harmonious sounds. She perceived, at a distance, a young shepherd seated in the cavity of a rock, at the foot of which he fed his flock; she drew near, to hear him the better. "See," said she, "what the mere instinct of nature can do! The ear teaches this shepherd all the refinements of the art. Can any one breathe purer sounds? What delicacy in his inflections! what variety in his gradations! Who can say after this, that taste is not a gift of nature?" Ever since Adelaide had dwelt in this solitude, this was the first time that her grief, suspended by an agreeable distraction, had surrendered her soul to the sweet emotion of pleasure.

Fonrose, who saw her approach, and seat herself at the foot of a willow to hear him, pretended not to perceive her.

He seized, without seeming to notice it, the moment of her retreat, and managed the course of his own flock in such a manner as to meet her on the declivity of a hill, where the roads crossed. He cast only one look on her, and continued his route, as if taken up with nothing but the care of his flock. But what beauties had that one look surveyed! What eyes! what a divine mouth! How much more ravishing still would those features, so noble and touching in their languor, become if love reanimated them! He saw plainly that grief alone had withered in their spring the roses on her lovely cheeks; but of so many charms, that which had moved him most was the noble elegance of her person and her gait; in the ease of her motions he seemed to see a young cedar, whose straight and flexible trunk yields gently to the zephyrs. This image, which love had just engraven in flaming characters on his memory, took up all his thoughts. "How feebly," said he, "have they painted to me this beauty, unknown to the world whose adoration she merits! And it is a desert that she inhabits! and it is thatch that covers her! She who ought to see kings at her feet, employs herself in tending an humble flock! Beneath what garments has she presented herself to my view! She adorns everything, and nothing disfigures her. Yet what a life for a frame so delicate! Coarse food, a savage climate, a bed of straw, great gods! And for whom are the roses made? Yes, I will rescue her from this state, so much too hard and too unworthy of her." Sleep interrupted his reflections, but effaced not her image.

Adelaide, on her side, sensibly struck with the youth, the beauty of Fonrose, ceased not to admire the caprices of Fortune. "Where will nature," said she, "unite so many talents and so many graces! But, alas! those gifts, which to him are here but useless, would be perhaps his misfortune in a more elevated state. What evils does not beauty create in the world! Unhappy that I am! is it for me to set any value on it?" This melancholy reflection began to poison in her

soul the pleasure she had tasted; she reproached herself for having been sensible of it, and resolved to deny herself for the future. The next day Fonrose thought he perceived that she avoided his approach: he fell into a profound melancholy. "Could she suspect my disguise?" said he. "Can I have betrayed it myself?" This uneasiness possessed him all the livelong day, and his hautboy was neglected. Adelaide was not so far but she could easily have heard it; and his silence astonished her. She began to sing herself. "It seems," said the song, "that everything around me partakes of my heaviness: the birds send forth none but sorrowful notes; echo replies to me in complaints; the zephyrs moan amidst these leaves; the sound of the brooks imitates my sighs—one might say that they flowed with tears."

Fonrose, softened by these strains, could not help replying to them. Never was concert more moving than that of his hautboy with Adelaide's voice. "O heaven," said she, "it is enchantment! I dare not believe my ears: it is not a shepherd, it is a god whom I have heard. Can the natural sense of harmony inspire such concord of sounds?" While she was speaking thus, a rural, or rather a celestial melody made the valley resound. Adelaide thought she saw in reality those prodigies which Poetry attributes to her sprightly sister Music. Astonished, confounded, she knew not whether she ought to take herself away, or resign herself up to this enchantment. But she perceived the shepherd, whom she had just heard, reassembling his flock in order to regain his hut. "He knows not," says she, "the delight he diffuses around him; his unsophisticated soul is not in the least vain of it: he waits not even for the praises I owe him. Such is the power of music: it is the only talent that places its happiness in itself; all the others require witnesses. This gift of heaven was granted to man in his innocence: it is the purest of all pleasures.. Alas! it is the only one I still relish, and I consider this shepherd as a new echo come to answer to my grief."

For some days following Fonrose affected to keep at a distance in his turn: Adelaide was afflicted at it. "Chance," said she, "seemed to have procured me this feeble consolation; I gave myself up to it too easily, and to punish me, she has deprived me of it." At last, one day when they happened to meet on the declivity of the hill, "Shepherd," said she to him, "are you leading your flocks far off?" These first words of Adelaide caused an emotion in Fonrose, which almost deprived him of the use of his voice. "I do not know," said he, hesitating; "it is not I who lead my flock, but my flock that leads me; these places are better known to it than to me: I leave to it the choice of the best pastures."—"Whence are you then?" said the shepherdess to him.—"I was born beyond the Alps," replied Fonrose.—"Were you born among shepherds?" continued she.—"As I am a shepherd," said he, looking down, "I must have been born to be one."—"I doubt it," replied Adelaide, viewing him with attention; "your talents, your language, your very air, all tell me that fate had placed you in a better situation."—"You are very obliging," said Fonrose; "but ought you, of all persons, to believe that Nature refuses everything to shepherds? Were you born to be a queen?" Adelaide blushed at this answer; and changing the subject, "The other day," said she, "you accompanied my songs on the hautboy with an art that would be a prodigy in a simple shepherd."—"It is your voice that is prodigious," replied Fonrose, "in a simple shepherdess."—"But has nobody instructed you?"—"I have, like yourself, no other guides than my heart and my ear. You sang, I was melted; what my heart feels, my hautboy expresses; I breathe my soul into it. This is the whole of my secret; nothing in the world is easier."—"That is incredible," said Adelaide.—"I said the very same on hearing you," replied Fonrose; "but I was forced to believe it. What would you have? Nature and love sometimes take a delight in assembling their most precious gifts in persons of the most humble fortune, to show

that there is no condition which they cannot ennoble." During this discourse, they advanced towards the valley; and Fonrose, whom a ray of hope now animated, began to make the air resound with those sprightly notes which pleasure inspires. "Ah! prithee now," said Adelaide, "spare my soul the troublesome image of a sentiment which she cannot relish. This solitude is consecrated to grief; its echoes are not used to repeat the accents of a profane joy; here everything groans in concert with me."—"I also have cause to complain," replied the young man; and these words, uttered with a sigh, were followed by a long silence.—"You have cause to complain!" replied Adelaide: "is it of mankind? is it of fortune?"—"I know not," said he; "but I am not happy; ask me no more." —"Hear me," said Adelaide: "heaven gives us to each other as a consolation in our troubles; mine are like an overwhelming load, which oppresses my heart. Whoever you may be, if you know misfortune, you ought to be compassionate, and I believe you worthy of my confidence; but promise me that it shall be mutual."—"Alas!" said Fonrose, "my misfortunes are such, that I shall perhaps be condemned never to reveal them." This mystery but redoubled the curiosity of Adelaide. "Repair to-morrow," said she to him, "to the foot of this hill, beneath that old tufted oak where you have heard me moan. There I will tell you things that will excite your pity." Fonrose passed the night in the utmost emotion. His fate depended on what he was going to hear. A thousand alarming ideas agitated him by turns. He dreaded, above all, being driven to despair by the communication of an unsuccessful and faithful love. "If she is in love," said he, "I am undone."

He repaired to the appointed place, and saw Adelaide coming. The day was overcast with clouds, and Nature, mourning, seemed to forebode the sadness of their conversation. As soon as they were seated at the foot of the oak, Adelaide spoke thus: "You see these stones which the grass begins to cover; they are the tomb of the most affectionate, the most virtuous

of men. My love and my imprudence cost him his life. I am a Frenchwoman, of a family of distinction, and, to my



"You see these stones which the grass begins to cover."

misfortune, too rich. The Count d'Orestan conceived the tenderest passion for me; I was not insensible to it, I felt it to excess. My parents opposed the inclination of our

hearts, and my frantic passion made me consent to a union sacred to virtuous souls, but disallowed by the laws. Italy was at that time the theatre of war. My husband went thither to join the corps which he was to command: I followed him as far as Briançon: my foolish tenderness retained him there two days, in spite of himself: for he, a young man, full of honour, prolonged his stay there with the greatest reluctance. He sacrificed his duty to me: but what had not I sacrificed to him? In a word, I required it of him; and he could not withstand my tears.

"He took leave with a foreboding which alarmed me: I accompanied him as far as this valley, where I received his adieus; and in order to wait to hear from him, I returned to Briançon. A few days after, a report was spread of a battle. I doubted whether d'Orestan had got thither; I was wishing it for his honour, dreading it for my love, when I received a letter from him, which I thought very consoling. 'I shall be such a day, at such an hour,' said he, 'in the valley, and under the oak where we parted; I shall repair there alone; I conjure you to go there, and wait for me likewise alone; if I live yet, it is but for you.' How great was my mistake! I perceived in this billet nothing more than impatience to see me again, and this impatience made me happy. So I repaired to this very oak. D'Orestan arrived, and after the tenderest reception, 'You would have it so, my dear Adelaide,' said he; 'I have failed in my duty at the most important moment of my life. What I feared has come to pass. A battle has happened; my regiment charged; it performed prodigies of valour, and I was not there. I am dishonoured, lost without resource. I reproach not you with my misfortune, but I have now but one sacrifice more to make you, and my heart is come to accomplish it.'

"At this discourse, pale, trembling, and scarcely breathing, I took my husband into my arms. I felt my blood congeal in my veins, my knees bent under me, and I fell down senseless.

He availed himself of my fainting to tear himself from my bosom, and in a little time I was recalled to life by the report of a shot, which killed him. I will not describe to you the situation I was in; it is inexpressible; and the tears which you now see flowing, the sighs that stifle my voice, are but a feeble image of it. After passing a whole night beside his bloody corpse, in grief that stupefied me, my first care was, to bury my shame along with him: my hands dug his grave. I seek not to move you; but the moment in which the earth must needs separate me from the sad remains of my husband, was a thousand times more dreadful to me than that can be which will separate my body from my soul. Spent with grief, and deprived of nourishment, my enfeebled hands took up two whole days in hollowing out this tomb with inconceivable labour. When my strength forsook me, I reposed myself on the livid and cold bosom of my husband. At last I paid him the rites of sepulture, and my heart promised him to wait in these parts till death reunites us.

"In the meantime, cruel hunger began to devour my exhausted entrails. I thought it criminal to refuse nature the support of a life more grievous than death. I changed my garments for the plain habit of a shepherdess, and I embraced that condition as my only refuge. From that time my only consolation has been to come here, and weep over this grave, which will be my own. You see," continued she, "with what sincerity I open my soul to you. With you I may henceforth weep at liberty; it is a consolation I had need of; but I expect the same confidence from you. Do not think that you have deceived me. I see clearly that the state of a shepherd is not less foreign, and newer to you than to me. You are young, you are perhaps given to tenderness; and, if I may believe my conjectures, our misfortunes have the same source, and you have loved as well as I. We shall only feel the more for one another. I consider you as a friend whom heaven, touched by my misfortunes, deigns to send me in my solitude.

Do you also consider me as a friend, capable of giving you, if not salutary counsel, at least a consolatory example."

"You pierce my very soul," said Fonrose, aghast at what he had just heard; "and whatever sensibility you may attribute to me, you are very far from conceiving the impression that the recital of your misfortunes has made on me. Alas! why cannot I return it with that confidence which you testify towards me, and of which you are so worthy? But I warned you of it; I foresaw it. Such is the nature of my sorrows, that an eternal silence must shut them up in the bottom of my heart. You are very unhappy," added he, with a profound sigh: "I am still more unhappy: this is all I can tell you. Be not offended at my silence; it is terrible to me to be condemned to it. A constant companion of all your steps, I will soften your labours; I will partake of all your griefs: I will see you weep over this grave, I will mingle my tears with yours. You shall not repent having deposited your woes in a heart, alas! only too tender."—"I repent me of it from this moment," said she, with confusion; and both with downcast eyes retired in silence from each other. Adelaide, on quitting Fonrose, thought she saw in his countenance the impression of a profound grief. "I have revived," said she, "the sense of his sorrows! and what must be their horror, when he thinks himself still more wretched than I!"

From that day there was no more singing and no more continuous conversation between Fonrose and Adelaide. They neither sought nor avoided one another: looks of consternation formed almost their only language; if he found her weeping over the grave of her husband, his heart was seized with pity, jealousy, and grief; he contemplated her in silence, and answered her sighs with deep groans.

Two months had passed away in this painful situation, and Adelaide saw Fonrose's youth wither as a flower. The sorrow which consumed him afflicted her so much the more deeply, as the cause of it was unknown to her. She had not the most

distant suspicion that she was the object of it. However, as it is natural, when two sentiments divide a soul, for one to weaken the other, Adelaide's regret on account of the death of d'Orestan became less lively every day, in proportion as she delivered herself up to the pity with which Fonrose inspired her. She was very sure that this pity had nothing but what was innocent in it; it did not even come into her head to defend herself from it; and the object of this generous sentiment being continually present to her view, awakened it every instant. The decline into which this young man was fallen became such, that she thought it her duty not to leave him any longer to himself. "You are dying," said she to him, "and you add to my griefs that of seeing you consumed with sorrow under my eye, without being able to apply any remedy. If the recital of the imprudences of my youth has not inspired you with a contempt for me; if the purest and tenderest friendship be dear to you; in short, if you would not render me more unhappy than I was before I knew you, confide to me the cause of your griefs: you have no person in the world but myself to assist you in supporting them; fear not that I shall divulge your secret, though it were more important than mine. The death of my husband has placed a gulf betwixt the world and me; and the confidence which I require will soon be buried in this grave, to which grief is slowly conducting me."—"I hope to go before you," said Fonrose, bursting into tears. "Suffer me to finish my deplorable life without leaving you afterwards the reproach of having shortened its course."—"O heaven, what do I hear!" cried she, with distraction. "What, I! can I have contributed to the evils which overwhelm you? Go on, you pierce my soul. What have I done? what have I said? Alas, I tremble! O Heaven! hast thou sent me into the world only to make men miserable? Speak, nay speak! you must no longer conceal who you are; you have said too much to dissemble any longer."—"Well then, I am I

am Fonrose, the son of those travellers whom you filled with admiration and respect. All that they related of your virtues and your charms inspired me with the fatal design of coming to see you in this disguise. I have left my family in the deepest sorrow, thinking they have lost me, and lamenting my death. I have seen you, I know what attaches you to this place, I know that the only hope that is left me is to die here adoring you. Spare me useless counsel and unjust reproaches. My resolution is as firm, as immovable as your own. If, in betraying my secret, you disturb the last moments of a life almost at an end, you will to no purpose injure me, who would never offend you."

Adelaide, confounded, endeavoured to calm the despair into which this young man was plunged. "Let me," said she, "do to his parents the service of restoring him to life; let me save their only hope: Heaven presents me with this opportunity of acknowledging their favours." Thus, far from driving him wild by a misplaced rigour, all the tenderness of pity, all the consolation of friendship, was put in practice in order to soothe him.

"Heavenly angel," cried Fonrose, "I see all the reluctance that you feel to make any one unhappy: your heart is with him who reposes in this grave: I see that nothing can detach you from him, I see how ingenious your virtue is to conceal your woe from me; I perceive it in all its extent, I am overwhelmed by it, but I pardon you! it is your duty never to love me, it is mine ever to adore you."

Impatient of executing the design which she had conceived, Adelaide arrived at her hut. "Father," said she to her old master, "do you think you have strength to travel to Turin? I have need of somebody whom I can trust, to give the Marquis and Marchioness of Fonrose the most interesting intelligence." The old man replied, that his zeal to serve them inspired him with courage. "Go," resumed Adelaide; "you will find them bewailing the death of their only son; tell them that he is

living, and in these parts, and that I will restore him to them; but that there is an indispensable necessity for their coming here themselves to fetch him."

He set out, arrived at Turin, sent in his address as the old man of the valley of Savoy. "Ah!" cried Madame de Fonrose, "some misfortune perhaps has happened to our shepherdess." —"Let him come in," added the Marquis; "he will tell us perhaps that she consents to live with us."—"After the loss of my son," said the Marchioness, "it is the only comfort I can taste in this world." The old man was introduced: he threw himself at their feet: they raised him. "You are lamenting the death of your son," said he; "I come to tell you that he lives; our dear child has discovered him in the valley: she sends me to inform you of it: but yourselves only, she says, can bring him back." As he spoke this, surprise and joy deprived the Marchioness of Fonrose of her senses. The Marquis, distracted and amazed, cried for help for his lady, recalled her to life, embraced the old man, published to the whole household that their son is restored to them. The Marchioness resumed her spirits. "What shall we do?" said she, taking the old man by the hands, and pressing them with tenderness; "what shall we do in gratitude for this benefit, which restores life to us?"

Everything was ordered for their departure. They set out with the good man: they travelled night and day, and repaired to the valley where their only treasure awaited them. The shepherdess was out at pasture: the old woman conducted them to her; they approached. How great was their surprise! their son, that well-beloved son, was by her side in the habit of a simple shepherd. Their hearts sooner than their eyes acknowledged him. "Ah! cruel child," cried his mother, throwing herself into his arms, "what sorrow have you occasioned us! why withdraw yourself from our tenderness? and what is it you come here for?"—"To adore," said he, "what you yourself admired."—"Pardon me, madam," said Adelaide,

while Fonrose embraced the knees of his father, who raised him with kindness; "pardon me for having left you so long



The shepherdess was out at pasture: the old woman conducted them to her.

in grief: if I had known it sooner, you should have been sooner consoled." After the first emotions of nature, Fonrose

relapsed into the deepest affliction. "Let us go," said the Marquis, "let us go rest ourselves in the hut, and forget all the pain that this young madman has occasioned us."—"Yes, sir, I have been mad," said Fonrose to his father, who led him by the hand: "nothing but the loss of my reason could have suspended the emotions of nature in my heart, so as to make me forget the most sacred duties; in short, to detach myself from everything that I held dearest in the world; but to this madness you gave birth, and I am but too severely punished for it. I love without hope the most accomplished person in the world: you see nothing, you know nothing of this incomparable woman: she is honour, sensibility, virtue itself; I love her even to idolatry, I cannot be happy without her, and I know that she cannot be mine."—"Has she confided to you," said the Marquis, "the secret of her birth?"—"I have learned enough of it," said Fonrose, "to assure you, that it is in no respect beneath my own: she has even renounced a considerable fortune to bury herself in this desert."—"And do you know what has induced her to it?"—"Yes, sir; but it is a secret which she alone can reveal to you."—"She is married, perhaps?"—"She is a widow; but her heart is not the more disengaged: her ties are but too strong."—"Daughter," said the Marquis, on entering the hut, "you see that you turn the heads of the whole family of Fonrose. The extravagant passion of this young man cannot be justified but by such a prodigy as you are. All my wife's wishes are confined to having you for a companion and a friend: this child here will not live unless he obtains you for his wife; I desire no less to have you for my daughter: see how many persons you will make unhappy by a refusal."—"Ah! sir," said she, "your goodness confounds me: but hear and judge for me."

Then Adelaide, in the presence of the old man and his wife, made a recital of her deplorable adventure. She added the name of her family, which was not unknown to the Marquis de Fonrose, and ended by calling on himself to witness

the inviolable fidelity she owed her spouse. At these words, consternation spread itself over every countenance. Young Fonrose, choked with sobs, threw himself into a corner of the hut, in order to give them free scope. The father, moved at the sight, flew to the assistance of his son: "See," said he, "my dear Adelaide, to what a condition you have reduced him." Madame de Fonrose, who was near Adelaide, pressed her in her arms, bathing her at the same time with her tears. "Alas! why, my daughter," said she, "why will you a second time make us mourn the death of our dear child?" The old man and his wife, their eyes filled with tears, and fixed upon Adelaide, waited her speaking. "Heaven is my witness," said Adelaide, rising, "that I would lay down my life in gratitude for such goodness. It would heighten my misfortunes to have occasion to reproach myself with yours; but I am willing that Fonrose himself should be my judge; suffer me, if you please, to speak to him for a moment." Then retiring with him alone, "Fonrose," said she, "you know what sacred ties retain me in this place. If I could cease to love and lament a husband who loved me but too well, I should be the most despicable of women. Esteem, friendship, gratitude, are the sentiments I owe you; but none of these can take the place of love: the more you have conceived for me, the more you have a right to expect from me: it is the impossibility of fulfilling that duty, that hinders my imposing it on myself. At the same time, I see you in a situation that would move the least sensitive heart; it is shocking to me to be the cause, it would be still more shocking to me to hear your parents accuse me with having been your destruction. I will forget myself then for the present, and leave you, as far as in me lies, to be the arbiter of our destiny. It is for you to choose that of the two situations which appears to you least painful, either to renounce me, to subdue yourself, and forget me; or to possess a woman, whose heart being full of another object, can only grant you sentiments too feeble to satisfy the wishes

of a lover."—"That is enough," said Fonrose, "and, in a soul like yours, friendship should take place of love. I shall be jealous, without doubt, of the tears which you may bestow on the memory of another husband; but the cause of that jealousy, in rendering you more respectable, will render you also more dear in my eyes."

"She is mine," said he, coming and throwing himself into the arms of his parents; "it is to her respect for you, to your goodness, that I owe her, and thus I owe you a second life." From that moment their arms were chains from which Adelaide could not disengage herself.

Did she yield only to pity, to gratitude? I would fain believe it, in order to admire her the more: Adelaide believed so herself. However it be, before she set out, she insisted on revisiting the tomb, which she could not quit without regret. "O my dear d'Orestan!" said she, "if from the womb of death thou canst read the bottom of my soul, thy shade has no cause to murmur at the sacrifice I make: I owe it to the generous sentiments of this virtuous family: but my heart remains thine for ever. I go to endeavour to make them happy, without any hope of being myself so!" It was not without some sort of violence they forced her from the place: but she insisted that they should erect a monument there to the memory of her husband; and that the hut of her old master and mistress, who followed her to Turin, should be converted into a country house, as plain as it was lonely, where she proposed to come sometimes to mourn the errors and misfortunes of her youth. Time, the assiduities of Fonrose, the fruits of her second marriage, have since opened her soul to the impressions of a new affection: and she is cited as an example of a woman remarkable and admirable even in her infidelity.



The Samnite Marriages.

LET every legislator, who would assure himself of the hearts of men, begin by ranging the women on the side of the laws and manners; let him put virtue and glory under the guard of beauty, under the tutelage of love: without this agreement he is sure of nothing.

Such was the policy of the Samnites, that warlike republic which made Rome pass under the yoke, and was for a long time her rival. What made a Samnite a warrior, a patriot, a man virtuous through every trial, was the care they took to attach to all these qualities the most valuable reward of love.

The ceremony of their marriages was celebrated every year in a spacious square, destined for military exercises. All the youth who were of a sufficient age to give citizens to the republic assembled on a solemn day. There the young men chose their wives, according to the rank which their virtues and their exploits had given them in the annals of their

country. We may easily conceive what a triumph this must have been to those women who had the glory of being chosen by the conquerors, and how pride and love, those two springs of the human passions, gave vigour to the virtues, on which all their success depended. The ceremony of the marriages was expected every year with a timid impatience: till then the young men and maidens of the Samnites never saw one another but in the temple, under the eyes of their mothers and of prudent old men, with a modesty equally inviolable to both sexes. Indeed this austere confinement was no restraint to the desires: the eyes and heart made a choice; but it was to the children a religious and sacred duty to confide their inclination to the authors of their days alone; a secret of this sort divulged was the shame of a family. This intimate communication of the dearest sentiment of their soul, this tender disclosure, which it was not permitted them to give to their desires, their regrets, their fears, but in the venerable bosom of Nature, made fathers and mothers the friends, the consolers, the support of their children. The pride of the old, the happiness of the others, connected all the members of a family by the warmest interests of the human heart; and this fellowship of pleasure and pain, cemented by habit and consecrated by duty, lasted till the grave. If the event did not answer their desires, an inclination which had not manifested itself abandoned its object so much the easier, as it would have been in vain to have pursued it with obstinacy, and there was a necessity for its giving place to the object of a new choice: for marriage was an act of duty in a citizen. The legislator had wisely considered, that he who will not take a wife himself, reckons in some measure on the wives of others: and in making a crime of adultery, he had made a duty of marriage. There was a necessity therefore of presenting themselves to the assembly as soon as they had attained the age pointed out by the laws, and of making a choice according to their rank, though it were not also according to their desires.

Among a warlike people, beauty, even in the weaker sex, has something fierce and noble, which savours of their manners. The chase was the most familiar amusement of the Samnite maidens; their skill in drawing the bow, their nimbleness in the race, are talents unknown among us. These exercises gave their persons a wonderful ease, and their action a freedom full of graces. When they were unarmed, modesty was painted on their countenances; as soon as they had fastened on their quivers, their heads assumed a warlike assurance, and courage sparkled in their eyes. The beauty of the men had a majestic and serious character; and the image of battles, for ever present to their imaginations, gave to their looks a grave, commanding, and savage boldness. Amidst this warlike youth was distinguished, by the delicacy of his features, his sensitive and tender air, the son of the brave Telespon, one of the old Samnites who had fought best for liberty. This old man, in resigning his arms to the hands of his son, had said to him, "My son, I hear the old men sometimes telling me, with an ill-natured raillery, that I ought to clothe you like a woman, and that you would have made a pretty huntress. These railleries afflict your father; but he consoles himself in the hope that Nature has at least made no mistake in the heart which she has given you."—"Take courage, my father," replied the young man, piqued with emulation; "these old men will perhaps be glad one day that their children should follow my example: let them take me for a girl here, the Romans shall not be mistaken in me." Agatis kept his word with his father, and displayed in his first campaigns an intrepidity, an ardour which changed railleries into encomiums. His companions said to one another with astonishment, "Who would have thought this effeminate body was filled with so manly a courage? Cold, hunger, fatigue, nothing daunts him: with his gentle and modest air he braves death full as well as we."

One day, in presence of the enemy, as Agatis looked with

composure on a shower of arrows falling around him, "You who are so handsome, how is it you are so brave?" said one of his companions, who was remarkable for his ugliness. At these words the signal for the attack was given. "And you who are so ugly," replied Agatis, "will you now try which of us two will carry off the standard of the battalion we are going to charge?" He spoke: both of them sprang forward, and, in the midst of the carnage, Agatis appeared with the standard in his hand.

However, he now approached the age wherein he was to enter himself in the number of married persons, and, in the quality of father, to obtain that of citizen. The young damsels, who heard his valour spoken of with esteem, and saw his beauty with a soft emotion, envied each other his glances. One alone at last attracted them, the beautiful Cephalis.

In her were assembled in the highest degree that modesty and boldness, those noble and touching graces, which characterised the Samnite beauties. The laws, as I have said, had not forbid the eyes to speak; and the eyes of love are very eloquent, when it has no other language. If you have sometimes seen lovers constrained by the presence of a severe witness, do not you admire with what rapidity the whole soul unfolds itself in the lightning of one fugitive glance? A look of Agatis declared his trouble, his fears, his hope, and the emulation of virtue and glory with which love had just inflamed his heart. Cephalis seemed to forbid her eyes to meet those of Agatis; but her eyes were sometimes a little slow in obeying her, and were not cast downwards till after they had answered. One day especially, and it was that which decided the triumph of her lover, one day her looks, after being fixed upon him, and remaining for some time immovable, were turned up towards heaven with the most tender expression. "Ah! I understand that hope," said the young man to himself; "I understand it, and I will accomplish it. Charming

maiden, have I flattered myself too much? Did not your eyes, raised up to heaven, beseech it to render me deserving



The young damsels envied each other his glances.

of choosing you? Well, heaven has listened to you, I feel it by the emotions of my soul. But, alas! all my rivals (and I

shall have rivals without number) will dispute this honour with me; a brilliant action depends upon circumstances: should any one happier than I attain it, he has the honour of the first choice; and the first choice, beautiful Cephalis, cannot but fall upon you."

These ideas engaged his attention without remission: they engaged also the attention of his mistress. "If Agatis had to choose," said she, "he would fix upon me; I dare believe it: I have observed him well, I have thoroughly read his soul. Whether he presents himself to my companions, or whether he speaks to them, he does not display to them that complaisance, that sweet earnestness, which he betrays on seeing me. I perceive also that his voice, naturally soft and tender, shows still more emotion when he speaks to me. His eyes especially . . . . Oh! his eyes have said to me what they say to no one else; and would it had pleased the gods that he were the only one who distinguished me from the crowd! Yes, my dear Agatis, it would be a misfortune to seem handsome to any other than thee. What comparison is there between him and those youths who terrify me while they seek me out with their eyes? Their murderous air frightens me. Agatis is valiant, but has nothing ferocious in him; even when he is under arms, he is strangely moving to behold. He will perform prodigies of valour, I am sure; but, after all, if fortune betrays love, and if some other has the advantage . . . . the thought freezes me with terror."

Cephalis dissembled not her fears from her mother. "Put up vows," said she to her, "put up vows for Agatis's glory; you will put them up for the happiness of your daughter. I think, I am sure he loves me; and can I help adoring him? You know that he has the esteem of our elders; he is the idol of all my companions; I see their confusion, their blushes, their emotion at his approach: one word from his mouth fills them with pride."—"Very well," said her mother, smiling, "if he loves you, he will choose you."—"He would choose me,

without doubt, if he had the right of choosing: but, my mother . . . ."—"But, my daughter, he will have his turn."—"His turn, alas! will he be in time?" replied Cephalis, fixing her eyes on the ground.—"How, my daughter? Methinks to hear you—the word is, Who shall have you? You flatter yourself a little."—"I do not flatter myself; I tremble; happy were I if I had known how to please only him whom I shall always love!"

Agatis, on his side, at evening of the day on which he took the field, said to his father, embracing him, "Adieu, dear author of my being: either you see me for the last time, or you shall see me again the most glorious of all the sons of the Samnites."—"Well said, my boy: thus it is that a well-born son ought to take leave of his father. Indeed, I see you animated with an ardour that astonishes even myself: what propitious deities inspire you?"—"What deities, my father? Nature and Love, the desire of imitating you, and of meriting Cephalis."—"Oh! I understand; love is concerned in it; there is no harm in that. Come, tell me a little: I think I have sometimes distinguished your Cephalis among her companions."—"Yes, my father, she is easily distinguished."—"But do you know that she is very beautiful?"—"Beautiful! beautiful as glory."—"I think I see her," continued the old man, who took a delight in animating him: "I see in her the figure of a nymph."—"Ah! my father," cried Agatis, "you do a great deal of honour to the nymphs."—"An elegant gait."—"And still more noble than elegant."—"A fresh complexion."—"The rose itself."—"Long tresses braided with grace."—"And her eyes, my father, her eyes! Oh! that you had seen them, when lifted up to heaven after being fixed on me, they prayed for victory."—"You are right; she is all charming, but you will have rivals."—"Rivals! beyond doubt I have a thousand."—"They will carry her off from you."—"They will carry her off from me?"—"To tell you the truth, I am afraid of it; these Samnites are very brave young fellows!"—"Oh!

let them be as brave as you please; that is not what disturbs me. Let them but give me an opportunity of meriting Cephalis; you shall hear of me." Telespon, who till then had taken a delight in stimulating him, could no longer contain his tears. "Ah! what a rare present heaven makes us," said he, embracing him, "when it gives us a feeling heart! It is the beginning of all the virtues. My dear child, you overwhelm me with joy. There is blood enough in my veins to make one more campaign; and you promise me such fine things, that I will make this along with you."

On the day of departure, according to custom, the whole army filed off before the young maidens, who were ranged on the spot to animate the warriors. The good old Telespon marched by his son's side. "Ah, ah!" said the other old men, "see, Telespon is grown young again: where is he going at his age?"—"To a wedding," replied the good man, "to a wedding." Agatis made him look from afar at Cephalis, who towered above her companions with a grace perfectly celestial. His father, who had his eyes upon him, perceived, that, in passing before her, his sweet and serene countenance was inflamed with a warlike ardour, and became terrible as the countenance of Mars. "Courage, my son," said he to him; "indulge thy passion, it becomes thee well."

Part of the campaign passed between the Samnites and the Romans in observing each other, without coming to any decisive action. The strength of the two states consisted in their armies; and the generals on both sides husbanded them like able officers. However, the young marriageable Samnites burned with impatience to come to blows. "I have done nothing yet," said one, "worthy to be inscribed in the annals of the republic; I shall have the shame of hearing myself named without any eulogy to distinguish me."—"What a pity," said another, "that they vouchsafe not to offer us an opportunity of signalising ourselves! I should have done wonders this campaign."—"Our general," said the greater part,

"will dishonour us in the eyes of our elders and wives. If he leads us back without fighting, they will have room to think that he mistrusted our valour."

But the sage warrior who was at their head heard them unmoved. From his slowness and delays, he promised himself two advantages: one was to persuade the enemy that he was weak or fearful, and to engage him, by this confidence, in an imprudent attack; the other, to suffer the impatience of his warriors to increase, and to carry their ardour to excess before he risked a battle. Both these stratagems succeeded. The Roman general, haranguing his troops, pointed out to them that the Samnites wavered, and were ready to fly before them. "The genius of Rome triumphs," said he to them; "that of our enemies trembles, and is not able to sustain our approach. Come on, brave Romans; if we have not the advantage of the ground, that of valour makes it up to us: it is ours; let us march."—"There they are," said the Samnite general to his impatient youth: "let us suffer them to approach within bow-shot, and you shall then have all the liberty imaginable to earn your wives."

The Romans advance: the Samnites wait them with firmness. "Let us fall upon them," said the Roman general; "an inert body cannot sustain the impetuosity of an onset." On a sudden the Samnites themselves spring forward, with the rapidity of coursers when the barrier is opened to them. The Romans halt; they receive the shock without being broken or disordered; and the skilfulness of their chief at once changes the attack to a defence. The fight went on long with incredible obstinacy: to conceive it, we must picture to ourselves men who had no other passions than love, nature, country, liberty, glory, defending, in those decisive moments, all those interests at once. In one of the redoubled attacks of the Samnites, old Telespon was dangerously wounded, as he fought by the side of his son. The youth, full of love for his father, seeing the Romans giving way on

all sides, and thinking the battle won, followed the invincible impulse of nature, and drawing his father out of the tumult, helped him to drag himself to some distance from the place of combat. There, at the foot of a tree, he dressed, with tears, the venerable old man's deep wound. While he was drawing the dart out of it, he heard near him the noise of a troop of Samnites, who had been repulsed. "Whither are you going, my friends?" said he to them, quitting his father. "You fly! this is your way;" and perceiving the left wing of the Romans uncovered, "Come on," said he, "let us attack their flank: they are vanquished, if you will but follow me." This rapid evolution struck terror into that wing of the Roman army; and Agatis, seeing them put to the rout, "Pursue," said he, "my friends, the road is open: I quit you for a moment, to go and assist my father." Victory at last decided for the Samnites, and the Romans, too much enfeebled by their losses, were obliged to retire within their walls.

Telespon had fainted away through pain. The care of his son reanimated him. "Are they beaten?" demanded the old man.—"We are putting the finishing stroke to it," said the young one; "things are in a good posture."—"If so," said the old man, smiling, "endeavour to recall me to life: it is sweet to conquerors; and I would see thee married." The good man, for a long time, had not strength to say more; for the blood which had flowed from his wound had reduced him to extremity.

The Samnites, after their victory, busied themselves the whole night in succouring the wounded: they spared no pains to save the worthy father of Agatis; and he recovered, though with some difficulty, from his exhaustion.

The return from the campaign was the time of their marriages, for two reasons: one, that the reward might follow close on the services done their country, and that the example might thence have more force; the other, that during the winter the young husbands might have time to give life to new

citizens, before they went to expose their own. As the deeds of these ardent youths had been more brilliant than ever, it was thought proper to give more pomp and splendour to the feast which was to be their triumph.

There were few maidens in the state who had not, like Cephalis, some community of sentiments and desires with some one of the young men; and each of them put up vows for him whose choice she hoped to fix, if he should have it in his power to choose.

The place in which the assembly was to be held was a vast amphitheatre, entered by triumphal arches, on which were seen hung up the spoils of the Romans. The young warriors were to repair there armed at all points; the young maidens with their bows and quivers, and as well clad as the simplicity of a state, in which luxury was unknown, permitted. "Come, daughters," said the mothers, eager to adorn them, "you must present yourselves at this august feast, with all the charms that heaven has been pleased to grant you. The glory of men is to conquer, that of women to please. Happy those who shall merit the wishes of these young and valiant citizens, who are now going to be adjudged the most worthy of giving defenders to the state! The palm of merit will shelter their habitation, the public esteem will surround it. Their children will be the elder sons of their country, and its most precious hope." While they spoke thus, these tender mothers interweaved with vine-leaves and myrtle the beautiful tresses of the young virgins, and gave to the folds of their veils that air and turn which was most favourable to the character of their beauty. From the knots of the girdle beneath the bosom, they drew festoons of the most elegant drapery; they fixed the quiver on their shoulders; they instructed them to present themselves with grace, leaning on the bow; and they threw back the light robe negligently, above one knee, in order to give their gait more ease and majesty. This industry of the Samnite mothers was an act of piety; and coquetry itself, employed

in the triumph of Virtue, assumed her sacred character. The maidens, admiring themselves in the crystal of the pure wave, never thought themselves sufficiently handsome; each of them exaggerated the advantages of her rivals, and dared no longer reckon upon her own.

But of all the wishes formed on that great day, there were none more ardent than those of the beautiful Cephalis. "May the gods grant us our prayers," said her mother to her, embracing her; "but, my daughter, await their will with the submission of an humble heart; if they have given you some charms, they know what value to set upon them. It is for you to crown their gifts with the graces of modesty. Without modesty, beauty may dazzle, but will never touch the heart. It is by this that it inspires a tender veneration, and obtains a kind of worship. Let this amiable modesty serve as a veil to desires, which, perhaps, may become extinct, before the day closes, and give place to a new inclination." Cephalis was not able to bear this idea without letting fall some tears. "These tears," said her mother to her, "are unworthy a Samnite maiden. Learn that of all the young warriors now about to assemble, there is not one but has lavished his blood for our defence and our liberty; that there is not one of them but merits you, and towards whom you ought to be proud of paying the debt due from your country. Think of that, dry up your tears, and follow me."

On his side, the good old Telespon conducted his son to the assembly. "Well," said he, "how goes the heart? I have been sufficiently pleased with you this campaign, and I hope they will speak well of it."—"Alas!" said the affectionate and modest Agatis, "I had but a moment for myself. I should perhaps have done something; but you were wounded. I owed all my attention to you. I do not reproach myself for having sacrificed my glory to you: I should be inconsolable for having betrayed my country; but I should have been no less so, for having abandoned my father. Thank heaven, my

duties were not incompatible; the rest is in the hand of the gods."—"How religious we are, when we are afraid!" said the old man, smiling: "confess that you were more resolute, when



"These tears," said her mother to her, "are unworthy a Samnite maiden."

you went out to charge the Romans; but take courage, all will go well: I promise you a handsome wife."

They repaired to the assembly, where several generations

of citizens, ranged in amphitheatre, formed a most imposing sight. The circuit rounded off into an oval. On one side were seen the daughters at the feet of their mothers; on the other side, the fathers ranged above their sons: at one end sat the council of old men; at the other the youth not yet marriageable, placed according to the degrees of their age. The new-married pairs of the preceding years surrounded the enclosure. Respect, modesty, and silence reigned throughout. This silence was suddenly interrupted by the noise of warlike instruments, and the Samnite general was seen to enter, environed by the heroes who commanded under him. His presence made all his rivals look down. He traversed the circuit, and placed himself with his retinue in the midst of the sages.

The annals of the republic were opened, and a herald read them with a loud voice, according to the order of time, the testimony which the magistrates and generals had paid to the behaviour of the young warriors. He who by any cowardice or baseness had set a blot upon his name, was condemned by the laws to the infamous punishment of celibacy, till he had redeemed his honour by some brave action: but nothing was more rare than such examples. A plain honesty, an irreproachable bravery, was the least praise that could be given a young Samnite: and it was a kind of shame to have done only one's duty. The greater part amongst them had given proofs of a courage, a virtue, which everywhere else would be deemed heroic, but which in the manners of that people were hardly distinguished, so familiar were they. Some raised themselves above their rivals by actions that were striking; but the judgment of the spectators became more severe in proportion as they received the report of virtues still more worthy of commendation; and those which had at first struck them, were effaced by greater strokes. The first campaigns of Agatis were of this number; but when they came to the recital of the last battle, and it was related how he had abandoned his

father to rally his companions, and lead them back to the fight, this sacrifice of nature to his country carried all their suffrages: the tears ran from the eyes of the old men; those who surrounded Telespon embraced him with joy, those at a greater distance congratulated him by gesture and look. The good man smiled and burst into tears; the very rivals of his son viewed him with respect; and the mothers, pressing their daughters in their arms, wished them Agatis for their husband. Cephalis, pale and trembling, dared not lift up her eyes: her heart, filled with joy and fear, had suspended its motion; her mother, who supported her on her knees, dared not speak to her for fear of betraying her, and thought she saw all eyes fixed upon her.

As soon as the murmur of the universal applause was appeased, the herald named Parmeno, and related of this young man that in the last battle, the courser of the Samnite general having fallen under him, transfixed by a deadly shaft, and the hero in his fall being for a moment defenceless, a Roman soldier was on the point of piercing him with his javelin, when Parmeno, to save the chief's life, had exposed his own, by intercepting the blow, from which he had received a deep wound. "It is certain," said the general, addressing himself to the assembly, "that this brave citizen made a buckler for me with his body; and if my life be of service to my country, it is a gift of Parmeno's." At these words, the assembly, less moved, but not less astonished at Parmeno's courage than at that of Agatis, bestowed upon him the same eulogies; and suffrages and good wishes were now divided between those two rivals. The herald, by order of the elders, commanded silence; and the venerable judges rose to deliberate. Their opinions were debated for a long time with equal advantage. Some of them maintained that Agatis ought not to have quitted his post to assist his father, and that he had done nothing but repair this fault by abandoning his father to rally his companions; but this unnatural

sentiment was espoused by very few. The most aged of the elders then spoke and said, "Is it not virtue that we are to recompense? the point then is only to know which of these two emotions is the most virtuous; to abandon a dying father, or to expose one's own life. Our young warriors have both of them performed an action decisive with respect to the victory: it is for you, virtuous citizens, to judge which of the two must have cost most. Of two examples equally serviceable, the most painful is that which must be most encouraged."

Will it be believed of the manners of this people? It was decided with one voice, that it was braver to tear one's self from the arms of a dying father, whom one could succour, than to expose one's self to death, even though it were inevitable, and all the suffrages concurred in decreeing to Agatis the honour of the first choice. But the contest about to arise will appear still less probable. The deliberations were carried on aloud; and Agatis had heard that the principle of generosity alone made the balance incline in his favour. There arose in his soul a reproach which made him ashamed. "No," said he in himself, "it is a surprise, I ought not to take unfair advantage of it." He asks leave to speak; they attend in silence. "A triumph which I had not merited," said he, "would be the torment of my life; and in the arms of my virtuous spouse, my happiness would be embittered by the crime of having obtained her unjustly. You think you crown in me the person who has done most for his country; O wise Samnites, I must confess, that what I did, was not entirely done for that alone. I love, I longed to merit what I love; and if any glory redounds to me from a conduct which you vouchsafe to commend, love divides it with virtue. Let my rival judge himself, and let him receive the prize which I yield to him, if he has been more generous than I."

How is it possible to express the emotion which this confession caused in all hearts? On one side it tarnished

the lustre of this young man's actions; on the other it gave to the character of his virtue something more heroic, more surprising, more uncommon, than the most noble devotion. This stroke of frankness and candour produced on his young rivals two very opposite effects. Some, admiring it with an undisguised joy, seemed to testify, by a noble assurance, that this example raised them above themselves; others, abashed and confused, appeared to be overwhelmed, as by a weight above their strength. The matrons and virgins, in their hearts, unanimously gave the prize of virtue to him who had the magnanimity to declare, that he was not worthy of it: and the elders had their eyes fixed on Parmeno, who, with a composed countenance, waited till they should deign to hear him. "I know not," said he at last, addressing himself to Agatis, "I know not to what degree the actions of men ought to be disinterested, in order to be virtuous. There is nothing, strictly speaking, but is done for our own satisfaction; but what I could not have made for mine, is the confession I have just heard; and even supposing that there may have been hitherto something more brave in my conduct than in yours, which is a point yet undecided, the severity with which you have just now judged yourself, raises you above me."

Here the elders, confounded, knew not which side to take: they had not even recourse to votes, in order to determine to whom to give the prize. It was decided by acclamation, that both of them merited it, and the honour of the second place was now unworthy either of one or the other. The most aged of the judges spoke again: "Why delay," said he, "by our irresolutions, the happiness of our young people? Their choice is made in the bottom of their hearts, let them be permitted to communicate one to the other the secret of their desires: if the object of them be different, each, without preference, will obtain the wife he loves; if it happen that they are rivals, the law of chance shall decide it; and there is no Samnite maiden but may glory in consoling the less successful

of these two warriors." Thus spoke the venerable Androgeus, and all the assembly applauded.

Agatis and Parmeno were made to advance to the middle of the circus. They began by embracing each other, and all eyes were bedewed with tears. Both, trembling, hesitated: they were afraid to name the wife of their desires: neither of them thought it possible that the other could have made a choice different from his own. "I love," said Parmeno, "the most accomplished of heaven's works; grace and beauty itself."—"Alas!" replied Agatis, "you love her whom I adore: it is naming her to paint her thus: the nobleness of her features, the gentle fire of her looks, the ineffable divinity in her shape and gait, sufficiently distinguish her from the crowd of Samnite maidens. How unhappy will one of us be, reduced to another choice!"—"You say true," replied Parmeno; "there could be no happiness without Eliana."—"Eliana, say you? What!" cried Agatis, "is it Eliana, the daughter of the wise Androgeus, whom you love?"—"And whom then should I love?" said Parmeno, astonished at the joy of his rival.—"Eliana! not Cephalis?" resumed Agatis, with transport. "Ah! if so, we are happy: embrace me, you restore me to life."

By their embraces it was easy to judge that love had set them at one. The elders ordered them to draw near, and, if their choice was not the same, to declare it aloud. At the names of Eliana and Cephalis the whole amphitheatre resounded with shouts of applause. Androgeus and Telespon, the brave Eumenes, father of Cephalis, Parmeno's father, Melantes, felicitated each other with that emotion which mingles in the joy of old men. "My friends," said Telespon, "we have famous children here. With what ardour are they going to beget others! When I think of it, I imagine myself to be still in the flower of my age. Paternal weakness apart, the day of marriages is a festival to me; I think it is I who marry all the virgins of the commonwealth." While he spoke thus, the good man jumped with joy; and as he was a widower, they

advised him to put himself again into the ranks. "No raillery," said he; "if I were always as young, I might yet do something to get myself talked of."

They repaired to the temple to celebrate the ceremony of the marriages at the foot of the altar. Parmeno and Agatis were conducted together in triumph: and there was ordered a solemn sacrifice, to return thanks to the gods for having given to the republic two such virtuous citizens.



The Good Husband

FELISONDE, one of those good fathers of a family who recall the golden age to our minds, had married his only daughter, Hortensia, to the Baron de Valsain, and his niece, Amelia, to the President de Lusane.

Valsain, gallant without assiduity, sufficiently affectionate without jealousy, too much taken up with his own reputation and advancement to make himself the guardian of his wife, had left her, upon the strength of her own virtue, to give herself up to the dissipations of a world, in which, himself a constant frequenter of it, he took a delight in seeing her shine. Lusane, more concentrated, more assiduous, breathed only for Amelia, who, on her side, lived but for him. The mutual care of pleasing was their constant employment, and to them the most sacred of duties was the sweetest of pleasures.

Old Felisonde was enjoying the union of his family, when the deaths of Amelia and Valsain diffused sorrow and mourning over it. Lusane in his grief had not even the consolation

of being a father: Valsain left Hortensia two children with very little to support them. The first sorrows of the young widow were only for her husband: but we forget self in vain, we return to it insensibly. The time of mourning was that of reflection.

At Paris, a young woman, who is only given to society, is exempt from censure as long as she is in the power of a husband: it is supposed that the person most interested ought to be the most hard to please, and what he approves, others dare not blame: but, left to herself, she falls again under the wardship of a severe and jealous public, and it is not at twenty-two, that widowhood is a free state. So Hortensia saw clearly that she was too young to depend only on herself, and Felisonde saw it still clearer. One day this good father communicated his fears to his nephew Lusane. "My friend," said he, "you are much to be pitied, but I am still more so. I have but one daughter; you know how I love her, and you see the dangers that she runs. The world, which has seduced her, invites her back again; her mourning over, she will resign herself to it: and I am afraid, old as I am, I may live long enough to have occasion to blush. My daughter has a fund of virtue: but our virtue is within ourselves, and our honour, that honour so dear, is placed in the opinion of others."—"I understand you, sir; and to say the truth, I share your uneasiness. But can we not induce Hortensia to make a new match?"—"Ha, my friend! she may make strange objections! two children—two children without fortune; for you know that I am not rich, and that their father was ruined."—"No matter, sir, consult Hortensia: I know a man, if he should be agreeable to her, who thinks justly enough, who has a heart good enough to serve as a father to her children." The good old man thought he understood him. "O you," said he to him, "who formed the happiness of my niece Amelia, you whom I love as my own son; Lusane! heaven reads my heart. . . . But tell me, does the husband whom you propose know my

daughter? Is he not afraid of her youth, her levity, the start she has made in the world?"—"He knows her as well as you do, and he esteems her no less."

Felisonde delayed not to speak to his daughter. "Yes, my father, I agree," said she, "that my situation is delicate. To be a spy upon one's self, to be afraid of one's self without ceasing, to be in the world as before one's judge, is the lot of a widow at my age: it is painful and dangerous."—"Well, then, daughter, Lusane has talked to me of a husband who would suit you."—"Lusane, my father! Ah, if it be possible, let him give me one like himself. Happy as I was myself with Valsain, I could not help sometimes envying the lot of his wife." The father, transported with her answer, proceeded to give an account of it to his nephew. "If you do not flatter me," said Lusane, "to-morrow we shall all be happy."—"What, my friend, is it you?"—"I myself."—"Alas! my heart had told me so."—"Yes, it is I, sir, who would console your old age, by bringing a daughter who is worthy of you back to her duty. I see that Hortensia, without giving in to indecent extravagances, has assumed all the airs, all the follies of a woman of fashion. Vivacity, caprice, the desire of pleasing others and of amusing herself, have engaged her in the labyrinth of a noisy and frivolous acquaintance: the point is to withdraw her from it. To do that, I have occasion for a little courage and resolution; I shall have tears perhaps to contend with, and that is much for a heart so sensitive as mine; nevertheless I can answer for myself. But you, sir, you are a father: and if Hortensia should come and complain to you . . ."—"Fear nothing; do with my daughter as you please: I confide her to your virtue: and if the authority of a husband be not enough, I resign to you that of a father."

Lusane was received by Hortensia with the most touching graces: "Think that you see in me," said she to him, "the wife that you have lost; if I take her place in your heart, I have nothing to regret."

When they came to draw up the settlement, "Sir," said Lusane to Felisonde, "let us not forget that we have two orphans. Their father's estate has not permitted him to leave them a large inheritance; let us not deprive them of their mother's, nor let the birth of my children be a misfortune to them." The old man was moved even to weeping by the generosity of his nephew, whom he called from that moment his son. Hortensia was not less sensible of the behaviour of her new husband. The most elegant equipage, the richest clothes, the most precious trinkets, a house in which everything breathed taste, elegance, wealth, announced to this young wife a husband attentive to all her pleasures. But the joy she felt was not of long duration.

As soon as a calm had succeeded to the tumult of the wedding, Lusane thought it his duty to come to an explanation with her on the plan of life which he wanted to trace out for her. He took for this serious discourse the peaceful moment of her waking; the moment in which the silence of the senses leaves the reason its perfect freedom, wherein the soul herself, lulled by the trance of sleep, seems to revive with pure ideas, and being wholly her own mistress, contemplates herself, and reads in her own bosom, as we see to the bottom of clear and tranquil water.

"My dear Hortensia," said he to her, "I want you to be happy, and to be always so. But it will cost you some slight sacrifices, and I had much rather ask them plainly of you, than engage you to them by indirect methods, which would show distrust.

"You have passed some agreeable years with the Baron de Valsain. Made for the world, and for pleasures, young, brilliant, and himself in the whirl of society, he inspired you with all his tastes. My character is more serious, my condition more modest, my temper a little more severe: it is not possible for me to assume his manners, and I believe it is the better for you. The path you have as yet followed is strewed

with flowers and snares; that which we are about to pursue has fewer attractions and fewer dangers. The charm which surrounded you would have been dissipated with youth; the serene days I prepare for you will be the same in all seasons. It is not in the midst of the world that a virtuous woman finds happiness; it is in the midst of her own household, in the love of her duties, the care of her children, and the intimate society of a worthy set of acquaintance."

This preamble gave Hortensia some surprise; above all, the word *household* startled her ear: but assuming a tone of raillery, "I shall perhaps, some day or other," said she, "become an excellent housewife; at present I know nothing about it. My duty is to love you, I fulfil it; my children do not yet want me: as to my acquaintance, you know that I see none but genteel people."—"Let us not confound, my dear, genteel people with good people."—"I understand your distinction; but in point of acquaintances we ought not to be so difficult. The world, such as it is, amuses me, and my way of living in it has nothing incompatible with the decencies of your condition; it is not I who wear the robe, and I do not see why Madame de Lusane should be more obliged to be a mope than Madame de Valsain. Be then, my dear President, as grave as you please; but do not take it amiss that your wife be giddy a few years longer: every age will bring its tastes along with it."—"It is a pity," replied Lusane, "to bring you back to seriousness, for you are a charming trifler. There is a necessity, however, for talking reason to you. Do you love without distinction in the world everything that composes it?"—"Not separately: but all together the medley pleases me well enough."—"What of the dealers in scandal, for instance?"—"The scandal-mongers have their charms."—"Yes; the charm of giving a ridiculous turn to the plainest things, a criminal air to the most innocent, and of publishing, with exaggerations, the foibles or irregularities of those whom they have just flattered."—"It is true, that at the first glance these

characters are alarming, but at bottom they are very little dangerous: from the moment that a person rails at all the world, his railing does no harm; it is a species of contagion which grows weak in proportion as it extends itself."—"And those scatter-brains whose very looks are an insult to a virtuous woman, and whose conversation dishonours her, what say you to them?"—"One never believes them."—"I would not imitate them in speaking ill of your sex: there are many estimable women, I know, but there are—"—"Just what there is amongst you, a mixture of virtues and vices."—"Very well; and what prevents our making a choice in this mixture?"—"We *do* make one for intimacy, but in the world we live with the world."—"But I, my dear, I would live only with people who by their manners and character are deserving to be my friends."—"Your friends, sir, your friends! and how many friends have we in our lives?"—"A great many, when we are worthy, and know how to cultivate them. I speak not of that generous friendship, the devotion of which proceeds almost to heroism; I call those friends who come to me with the desire of finding joy and peace, disposed to pardon my foibles, to conceal them from the eyes of the public, to treat me when present with frankness, when absent with affection. Such friends are not so rare, and I presume to hope that I shall have such."—"With all my heart; we will compose our intimate society of them."—"I will not have two sets of acquaintance."—"What, sir, will not your door be open?"—"Open to my friends, always; to all comers, never, I give you my word."—"No, sir, I will not suffer you to revolt the public by odious distinctions. We need not love the world, but we ought to fear it, and not offend it."—"Oh, be easy, my dear, that is my concern: they will say that I am a brute, and a jealous brute perhaps; that signifies little to me."—"It signifies to me. I would have my husband respected, and not have cause to reproach myself with having made him the town-talk. Form your own company as you shall think proper, but allow me to

cultivate my old acquaintance, and prevent the court and town from letting their tongues loose upon you." Lusane admired the address of a young woman in defending her liberty. "My dear Hortensia," said he to her, "it is not as a whim, that I have taken my resolution: it is, you may believe me, upon thorough consideration, and nothing in the world can change it. Choose, among the persons whom you visit, such a number of decent women and honourable men as you shall think proper, my house shall be theirs; but that choice made, take leave of the rest. I will join my friends to yours: our two lists united shall be deposited with my porter for his constant rule; and if he deviates from it he shall be discharged. This is the plan which I propose to myself, and which I wanted to communicate to you."

Hortensia remained confounded at seeing all her fine projects vanish in a moment. She could not believe that it was Lusane, that gentle and complaisant man, who had just been talking to her. "After this," said she, "who can trust men? see the tone he assumes! with what composure he dictates his will to me! To see only virtuous women, and accomplished men! a fine chimera! And then what an amusing society this circle of respectable friends must afford! *Such is my plan*, said he, as if there was nothing but to obey when he had said it. See how we spoil them. My cousin was a good little woman, who moped as much as he pleased. She was as happy as a queen the moment her husband deigned to smile upon her, and, quite transported with one caress, she would come to me and boast of him as a divinity. He believes, without doubt, that according to her example I shall have nothing else to do but to please him; he is mistaken, and if he intends to put me in leading-strings, I will let him see that I am no longer a child."

From that moment, to the joyous, free, and endearing manner which she had observed with Lusane, succeeded a cold and reserved air, which he saw plainly enough, but took

no notice of to her. She had not failed to make her marriage known to that swarm of slight acquaintance, who are called friends. They came in crowds to congratulate her, and Lusane could not decline returning those visits of ceremony with her, but he infused into his politeness such striking distinctions, that it was not difficult for Hortensia to discern those whom he wished to see again.

In this number was not included a certain Olympia, who, with a sovereign contempt for the opinion of the public, was wont to maintain that everything which pleases is right, and to add example to precept; nor Climene, who did not know why a woman should make any scruple to change her lovers when she is tired of the man she has taken, and thought timid precautions of secrecy too much beneath her quality. Nor did it comprise those smart toilette and scene hunters, who, leading in Paris a life of idleness and inutility, *grubs in the morning and butterflies in the evening*,[1] pass one half of their time in doing nothing, and the other half in doing nothing of consequence; nor those obliging gentry by profession, who, having no personal existence in the world, attach themselves to a handsome woman to pass among her danglers, and who ruin her in order to support themselves.

Hortensia retired to her own apartment, uneasy and pensive. She seemed to herself on the point of being deprived of everything that makes life agreeable: vanity, the taste for pleasure, the love of liberty, everything revolted against the empire which her husband would fain assume. However, having armed herself with resolution, she thought it her duty to dissemble for a time, the better to choose the moment of breaking out.

[1] *Grubs in the morning, and butterflies in the evening.*] *Chenilles le matin, and papillons le soir.* The humour of this passage, being in some degree local, cannot be entirely preserved in the translation. It is an allusion to dress, *En chenille* being at Paris a common cant phrase for a morning dishabille.

The next day Lusane asked her if she had made out her list. "No, sir," said she, "I have not, and I shall not make any."—"Here is mine," continued he, without any discomposure: "see if in the number of your friends and of mine I have forgot any one that you like, and that suits you."—"I have told you, sir, that I shall not meddle in your arrangements, and I beg of you once for all not to interfere in mine. If our acquaintance do not suit, let us do like all the rest of the world: let us divide them without constraining ourselves. Have those whom you like to dinner; I will have those whom I like to supper."—"Ah, my dear Hortensia! what you propose to me is far from my principles! Do not think of it: never shall such a custom take root in my house. I will make it as agreeable as I can to you; but no distinction, if you please, between your friends and mine. This evening all whom this list contains are invited to sup with you. Receive them well, I beseech you, and prepare yourself to live with them." At these words he retired, leaving the list for Hortensia to peruse.

"There," said she, "his law is laid down!" And running it over, she was encouraging herself not to submit to it, when the Countess de Fierville, Valsain's aunt, came to see her, and found her with tears in her eyes. This haughty woman had taken a fancy for Hortensia, and as she flattered her inclinations, had gained her confidence. The young wife, whose heart stood in need of relief, told her the cause of her chagrin. "What!" cried the Countess, "after having had the folly to dispose of yourself so unsuitably, will you also be so weak as to degrade yourself? You a slave! and to whom? a mere lawyer! Remember that you have had the honour to be Madame de Valsain." Hortensia was now ashamed of having had the weakness to expose her husband. "Though he may be in the wrong," said she, "that should not hinder me from respecting him: he is the best fellow in the world, and what he has done for my children——"—"A good fellow! who is

not? That is a merit to be met with in every street. And what has this good fellow done for your children that is so



"What!" cried the Countess, "after having had the folly to dispose of yourself so unsuitably, will you also be so weak as to degrade yourself?"

wonderful? He has not robbed them of their fortune. He had better have abused your father's weakness! No, madam,

he has not acquired the right of speaking as if he were your master. Let him preside in his own court, but leave you mistress at home."

At these words Lusane entered. "In my house, madam, neither my wife is mistress nor am I master. Reason commands; and probably it is not you whom she will choose for an arbitress."—"No, sir," replied the Countess, with a consequential tone, "it is not for you to make laws for this lady. You have overheard me, and I am glad of it; you know my opinion of the absurdity of your proceedings."—"Madam," replied Lusane, "if I were as wrong as you suppose me, I am not to be corrected by affronts. Gentleness and modesty are the arms of your sex, and Hortensia is much more powerful by herself than with your assistance. Allow us to make our own arrangements, since we are the persons who must live together. Though you should have rendered her duties odious to her, you could not have dispensed her from fulfilling them; though you should have made her lose the confidence and friendship of her husband, you could not have made her amends for them. Spare her that advice which she neither will nor ought to follow. To another they might have been dangerous; to her, thank heaven, they are only useless. Hortensia," added he, going, "you did not wish to give me uneasiness, but let this serve you as a lesson."

"See how you defend yourself!" said Madame de Fierville to Hortensia, who had not even dared to lift up her eyes. "Obey, my dear, obey. It is the lot of weak souls. Good heaven!" said she, going out, "I am the gentlest, the most virtuous woman on the face of the earth; but if a husband had dared to treat me thus, I should have taken an handsome revenge of him." Hortensia had scarce strength enough to rise to attend Madame de Fierville, so great was her terror and confusion. She perceived the advantage that her imprudence gave her husband; but far from availing himself of it, he did not even so much as reproach her with it, and

his delicacy punished her more than his resentment could have done.

In the evening, when the visitors were assembled, Lusane seized the moment when his wife was still in her own apartment. "Here," said he to them, "is the rendezvous of friendship: if you like it, come often, and let us pass our lives together." They all replied with one voice, that they desired nothing better. "Here," continued he, presenting to them the good Felisonde, "here is our worthy and affectionate father, who will be the soul of our pleasures. At his age, joy has more feeling and emotion in it than in youth, and nothing is more amiable than an amiable old man. He has a daughter whom we both love, and whom we would make happy. Assist me, my friends, to keep her among us, and let love, nature, and friendship conspire to render her house every day more agreeable to her. She entertains the prepossessions of her age for the world; but when she shall have tasted the charms of a virtuous society, this vain world will touch her but little." While Lusane spoke thus, old Felisonde could not refrain from dropping some tears. "O my friend," said he, clasping him in his arms, "happy the father who at his death can leave his daughter in such good hands!"

A moment afterwards Madame de Lusane came in. All hearts flew out to meet her; but her own was not easy. She disguised her ill-temper under the reserved air of ceremony, and her politeness, though grave, still appeared amiable and touching; such a gift of embellishing everything have natural graces.

They played. Lusane made Hortensia observe that all his company played low. "It is," said he, "the way to maintain union and joy. High play absorbs and alienates the mind: it afflicts those who lose, it imposes on those who win the duty of being grave, and I think it incompatible with the openness of friendship." The supper was delightful: merriment and good-humour were diffused round the table. The heart and

the mind were at ease: the gallantry was such as modesty might smile at, and neither decency nor liberty was under restraint. In another situation Hortensia would have relished these tranquil pleasures, but the idea of constraint which she attached to them embittered their sweetness.

Next day Lusane was surprised to find her of a freer and pleasanter air: he suspected that she had taken some new resolution. "What shall we do to-day?" said he.—"I am going to the play," said she, "and I shall come home to supper."—"Very well; and who are the ladies you are going with?"—"Two of Valsain's friends, Olympia and Artenice."—"It is bitter to me," said the husband, "to be obliged continually to give you uneasiness, but why, Hortensia, will you expose me to it? Do you think me so inconsistent in the principles I have laid down, as to consent that you should be seen in public with those women?"—"To be sure you must consent to it, for the party is settled, and I shall certainly not fail in it."—"Pardon me, madam, you will fail in it, that you may not fail in the regard due to yourself."—"Is it failing in regard to myself to visit women whom all the world visits?"—"Yes, it is to expose yourself to be confounded with them in the opinion of the public."—"The public, sir, is not unjust, and in the world all persons answer for themselves."—"The public, madam, supposes with reason that those who are allied in pleasures, are allied in manners, and you ought not to have anything in common with Olympia and Artenice. If you would not break off with them too abruptly, there is a way: excuse yourself only from the play, and invite them to supper: my door shall be shut against all my friends, and we will be alone with them."—"No, sir, no," said she to him crossly, "I will not abuse your complaisance;" and she wrote to excuse herself. Nothing had cost her so much as this billet: tears of vexation bedewed it. "To be sure," said she, "I care very little for these women; the play interests me still less: but to see one's self crossed in everything! never

to have a will of one's own! to be subjected to that of another! to hear him dictating his laws to me with insulting tranquillity! This drives me mad, and might make me capable of everything." It was certain, however, that the tranquillity of Lusane was far from having an insulting air, and it was easy to see that he did violence to himself. His father-in-law, who came to sup with him, perceived the melancholy in which he was plunged. "Ah! sir," said Lusane to him, "I see that the engagement on which I have entered with you is very painful to fulfil!" He told him what had happened. "Courage, my friend," said this good father to him: "let us not be discouraged; if it pleases heaven you will render her worthy your cares and love. In pity to me, in pity to my daughter, maintain your resolution. I will go and see her, and if she complain . . ."—"If she complain, console her, sir, and appear sensible of her grief; her reason will be more tractable when her heart has relieved itself. Let her hate me just at present; I expected it, and am not surprised at it; but if the bitterness of her temper should alter the sentiments of nature in her soul, if her confidence in you should be weakened, all would be lost. The goodness of her heart is my only resource, and it is only by an unalterable gentleness that we can prevent her being exasperated. After all, the trials to which I put her are grievous at her time of life, and you must be her support."

These precautions were useless; whether from vanity, or from delicacy, Hortensia had the power to conceal her chagrin from the eyes of her father. "A good sign," said Lusane; "she knows how to subdue herself; and there are none but weak souls of whom we must despair." The day following they dined together alone, and in the most profound silence. When they rose from table, Hortensia ordered the horses to be put to. "Where are you going?" said her husband.—"To make an excuse, sir, for the rudeness I was guilty of yesterday."—"Go, Hortensia, since you will have it so; but

if my peace be dear to you, take your last leave of those women."

Artenice and Olympia, to whom Madame de Fierville had related the scene she had had with Lusane, had little doubt that it was he who had hindered Hortensia from going to the play with them. "Yes," said they to her, "it was he: we saw him but for a minute, but we have formed our opinion of him: he is a harsh, dictatorial man, and one who will make you unhappy."—"He has talked to me hitherto only in the style of friendship. It is true that he has his particular principles, and a way of living but little compatible with the customs of the world, but . . ."—"But let him live by himself," replied Olympia, "and let him leave us to amuse ourselves in peace. Do you ask him to follow you? A husband is the man in the world we can best spare, and I do not see why you have occasion for his advice to receive whomsoever you think proper, and to go and see whom you please."—"No, madam," said Hortensia to her, "it is not so easy as you imagine, to put one's self, at my age, above the will of a husband, who has behaved so well to me."—"She gives way; see, she is quite tamed," replied Artenice. "Ah, my dear! you do not know what it is to yield once to a man, with whom one is to pass one's life. Our husbands are our tyrants if they are not our slaves. Their authority is a torrent which swells as it runs: we can stop it only at its source; and I speak from experience: for having been twice guilty of an unfortunate complaisance to my husband, I was for six months together obliged to struggle with him for the ascendency which my weakness had given him; and but for an unparalleled effort of courage it would have been all over with me; I was a gone woman."

"That depends upon tempers," said Hortensia, "and my husband is not one of those who are to be brought down by obstinacy."—"Undeceive yourself," replied Olympia; "there is not one whom gentleness ever reconciles; it is by resisting

them that we rule them; it is by the dread of ridicule and shame that we hold them. What are you afraid of? A woman is very strong when she is handsome, and has nothing to reproach herself with. Your cause is that of all women; and the men themselves, the men who know the world, will be on your side." Hortensia objected the example of her cousin, whom Lusane had made happy. They replied that her cousin was a fool; that if the life which she had led was a good one to her, it was because she knew no better; but that a woman, familiar with the great world, who had tasted the charms of it, and formed one of its ornaments, was not made to bury herself in the solitude of her own house, and in the narrow circle of an obscure acquaintance. They talked to her of a superb ball which the Duchess of —— was to give next day. "All the handsome women will be invited there," said they to her; "if your husband prevents your going, it is an act that will cry out for vengeance, and we advise you, as friends, to seize that occasion to break out, and insist on a separation."

Though Hortensia was very far from wishing to follow these violent counsels, she still retained a bitterness in her soul, at seeing that her unhappiness would be known in the world, and that they would look for her in vain at the feasts where so lately she had seen herself adored. On her return home, a card was put into her hands: she read it with impatience, and sighed after having read it. Her trembling hand still held it, when her husband accosted her. "It is," said she to him carelessly, "a card of invitation to the Duchess of ——'s ball."—"Well, madam?"—"Well, sir, I shall not go: be easy."—"Why then, Hortensia, deprive yourself of decent pleasures? Have I forbid you them? The honour that is done you pleases me as much as it does yourself, and more; go to the ball, eclipse everything there that is most lovely: that will be a triumph to me." Hortensia could not conceal her surprise and joy. "Ah! Lusane," said she to him, "why are you

not always the same? this is the husband I promised myself. I recover him now; but is it for long?"

Lusane's company assembled in the evening, and Hortensia was adorable. They proposed suppers, parties to the play; she engaged herself to them with the best grace. Cheerful with the men, engaging with the women, she charmed them all. Lusane alone dared not yet give himself up to the joy which she inspired: he foresaw that this good humour would not continue long without clouds. However, he spoke privately to his valet-de-chambre, and the next day when his wife asked for her domino, it was like a surprise in a play. They presented her with a ball-dress, which the hand of Flora seemed to have embroidered with the most beautiful colours of the spring. The flowers, in which the art of Italy equals nature, and deceives the ravished eyes, these flowers ran in garlands, over the light waves of a silk tissue of the most brilliant freshness. Hortensia, in love with her dress, her husband, and herself, could not conceal her transport. Her glass being consulted, promised her the most striking successes, and that oracle never deceived her: accordingly, on appearing at the assembly, she enjoyed the flattering emotion occasioned by unanimous admiration; and to a young woman this ebb, this flow, this murmur, have something so touching! You may suppose that at her return Lusane was pretty well treated: she seemed to wish to express all the transports which she had raised. At first he received her caresses without reflection, for the wisest sometimes forget themselves: but when he recollected himself, "A ball," said he, "a domino, turns this young head! Ah! what conflicts have I yet to sustain before I see her such as I could wish her!"

Hortensia had seen at the ball all those giddy young people from whom her husband wanted to detach her. "He does well," said they to her, "to grow reasonable, and to restore you to your friends: he would have become the public jest, and we had made a league to annoy him wherever he appeared;

tell him then, for his own ease, to vouchsafe to let us see you. If we have the unhappiness to displease him, we give him leave to put himself under no restraint; but let him be contented with rendering himself invisible, without requiring that his wife should be so." Intimidated by these menaces, Hortensia gave her husband to understand that they took it ill that his door was shut against them, that people of fashion complained of it, and proposed to remonstrate with him upon it. "If they do," said he, "I will teach them how to take their revenge on me: let each of them marry a handsome woman, live at home with their friends, and shut their doors in my face every time that I go to trouble them."

Some days after, two of these young fellows, piqued at not having been able to obtain admission to Hortensia, saw Lusane at the opera, and went up to him, to ask him the reason of the rude behaviour of his Swiss. "Sir," said the Chevalier de St. Placide to him, "have they told you that the Marquis de Cirval and myself have called twice at your house?"—"Yes, gentlemen, I know that you have given yourselves that trouble."—"Neither yourself nor your lady was to be seen."—"That is very often the case."—"Yet you see company."—"We only see our friends."—"We are Hortensia's friends, and in Valsain's time we saw her daily. Ah! sir, what an agreeable man was Valsain! she has not lost by the exchange: but he was the genteelest, the most complaisant of all husbands."—"I know it."—"He, at least, was not jealous."—"Happy man!"—"You speak as if you envied him; can it be true, as they say, that you are not so easy?"—"Ah! gentlemen, if ever you marry, take care you do not love your wives; it is a cruel thing, this jealousy!"—"What, are you really come to that?"—"Alas! yes, for my sins."—"But Hortensia is so virtuous!"—"I know it."—"She lived like an angel with Valsain."—"I hope she will live like one with me too."—"Why then do her the injustice of being jealous?"—"It is an involuntary emotion, which I cannot account for."

—"You confess then it is a folly?"—"To such a degree, that I cannot see any man of a handsome figure, or distinguished merit near my wife, but my head turns; and this is the reason that my gate is shut against the most amiable people in the world."—"The Marquis and I," said the Chevalier, "are not dangerous, and we hope . . . "—"You, gentlemen, you are among those who would make me unhappy all my life. I know you too well not to fear you: and since I must confess it, I have myself asked my wife never to see you again."—"But, Mr. President, that is but a sorry kind of a compliment."—"Ah! gentlemen, it is the most flattering one that a jealous husband can make you."—"Chevalier," said the Marquis, when Lusane had quitted them, "I thought we were going to make a jest of this man."—"That was my design."—"I am afraid, God forgive me, that he makes a jest of us."—"I have some suspicion of it: but I will take my revenge on him."—"How?"—"As men revenge themselves on a husband."

The same evening, at supper, at the Marchioness of Bellune's, they represented Lusane as the most odious of men. "And the little woman," said the Marchioness, "has the kindness to let him interfere with her? Ah! I will give her a lesson." Madame de Bellune's house was the rendezvous of all the giddy people both of city and court, and her secret for drawing them together was to assemble the handsomest women. Hortensia was invited to a ball which she gave. It was necessary to acquaint Lusane with it beforehand; but without having any appearance of asking his consent, she just dropped a word *en passant.* "No, my dear," said Lusane to Hortensia. "Madame de Bellune's house is in a style that does not suit you. Her ball is a rendezvous at which you ought not to be. The public is not obliged to believe you more infallible than another, and in order to prevent all suspicion of miscarriage, the surest way is to avoid the hazard of it." The young wife, so much the more irritated at this refusal, as she

did not expect it, burst into complaints and reproaches; "You abuse," said she to him, "the authority which I have confided to you; but beware of driving me to extremities." —"I understand you, madam," replied Lusane to her, in a firmer and graver tone: "but as long as I esteem you, I shall not fear this menace, and I should fear it still less, if I were to cease to esteem you." Hortensia, who had attached no idea to the words that had just escaped her, blushed at the meaning they seemed to carry with them, and replied only by tears. Lusane seized the moment when resentment yielded to confusion. "I grow odious to you," said he: "yet what is my crime? that of saving your youth from the dangers which surround it, of detaching you from that which might injure, I do not say your innocence, but your reputation, of wanting to make you love early what you ought to love always."—"Yes, sir, your intentions are good; but you have an awkward way of carrying them into execution. You want to make me love my duty, and you make a slavery of it. There may be some ill consequences to be foreseen in my connections: but the right method was to dissolve instead of breaking them, and to detach me insensibly from the people who displease you, without making yourself an object of ridicule, by imprisoning me in my own house."—"When the ridicule is without foundation," replied Lusane, "it recoils on those who give it. The prison of which you complain is the asylum of virtue, and will also be that of peace and happiness whenever you shall think proper to make it so. You upbraid me with not having used a little delicacy towards these people and yourself; I have had my reasons for cutting to the quick. I know that at your time of life the contagion of fashion, example, and habit makes new progress every day; and that without cutting off all communication, there is no way of guarding against it. It gives me inexpressible uneasiness to talk to you in a tone of authority; but it is my affection for you that gives me courage: a friend ought

to know on occasion how to contradict a friend. Be well assured then, that as long as I love you, I shall have the strength to resist you ; and woe to you if I abandon you."—"Woe to me! you esteem me very little if you think me lost the moment you cease to lead me in a string. No, sir, I knew how to conduct myself long ago, and Valsain, who did me justice, never had occasion to repent of his confidence. I own to you, that I did not intend to impose on myself a tyrant in my husband. To submit to your will, one ought to have a strength or a weakness which I do not possess; all the sacrifices you impose on me are grievous, and I shall never accustom myself to them."

Lusane, left alone, reproached himself for the tears he had made her shed. "What have I undertaken?" said he, "and what a trial to my soul! I her tyrant! I, who love her more than my life, and whose heart is torn in pieces by her complaints! If I persist I drive her to distraction, and if I give way one single moment, I lose the fruit of my perseverance. One step into this round of company, which she loves, will engage her in it anew. I must play out this cruel part, this part so much more cruel to myself than to her."

Hortensia passed the night in the greatest trouble; all violent measures presented themselves to her mind; but the probity of her soul shuddered at them. "Why lose heart?" said she, when her wrath was a little appeased. "This man keeps command of himself, and rules me because he does not love me; but if he should ever come to love me, I should soon reign in my turn. Let me use the only arms nature has given us, gentleness and seduction."

Lusane, who had not closed his eyes, came to ask her in the morning, with an air of friendship, how she had passed the night. "You know how," said she to him, "you who take a pleasure in disturbing my repose. Ah! Lusane, was it for you to be the cause of my unhappiness? who could have told me that I should have repented of a choice which I made so gladly

and sincerely?" Saying these words, she stretched out her hand to him, and two eyes, the most eloquent that love ever yet made speak, reproached him with his ingratitude. "My better half," said he to her, embracing her, "believe that I have set all my pride and my happiness on making you happy. I would have your life strewed with flowers, but permit me to pluck away the thorns. Wish for what may never cost you any regret, and be assured it shall be fulfilled in my soul, as soon as formed in yours. The law which I impose upon you is only your own will; not that of the moment, which is a whim, a caprice; but that which will arise from reflection and experience, that which you will have ten years hence. I entertain for you the tenderness of a lover, the frankness of a friend, and the uneasy vigilance of a father; there is my heart; it is worthy of you, and if you are still unjust enough to complain of it, you will not long do so." This discourse was accompanied with the most touching marks of passionate love, and Hortensia appeared sensible of them. A week passed away in the best understanding, in the most intimate union that could reign between two married people. To the charms of beauty, of youth, Hortensia joined the enchantment of those timid caresses, which love, in conjunction with duty, seems to steal from modesty. It is the finest of all toils to enmesh a tender heart. But was all this really sincere? Lusane thought so; I think so too. After all, she would not be the first woman who has made her inclination agree with her views, and her policy with her pleasures.

In the meantime, they approached those days, consecrated to extravagance and joy, during which we are as extravagant, but much less joyous than our fathers. Hortensia gave some intimation to Lusane of her desire to give an entertainment, in which music should precede a supper, which should be followed by a dance. Lusane consented with the best grace in the world, but not without precaution: he agreed with his wife on the choice and number of persons whom she should

invite; and the cards were distributed according to this arrangement.

The day arrived, and everything was prepared with the attention of a lavish lover; but that very morning the Swiss asked to speak to his master. "Besides those who shall come with cards, it is my lady's pleasure," said he to him, "that I admit all who come to the ball. Is that your intention, sir?"—"To be sure," said Lusane, concealing his surprise, "and you ought not to doubt but I approve what your lady orders." He then went directly to her, and having told her what had just happened, "You have exposed yourself," said he, "to be put to shame before your servants; you have hazarded what a woman cannot be too careful of, the confidence of your husband. Is it for you, Hortensia, to play tricks on me? Were I less persuaded of the probity of your soul, what an opinion would you give me of it, and what would have been the success of this imprudence? The pleasure of afflicting me for a moment, and of making me more mistrustful of you than I would wish to be. Ah! suffer me to esteem you for ever, and respect yourself as much as I respect you! I will not humble you by revoking the order you have given, but you will give me unspeakable uneasiness if you do not revoke it yourself, and your conduct this day will determine mine all my life."—"I have committed a fault," said she, "I see it, and I will repair it. I will send word that I shall have neither music, nor supper, nor ball, to-night; I would not wear an appearance of joy when I have a deadly grief in my heart. The public shall know that I am unhappy, but I am weary of dissembling."

Lusane fell at her feet. "If I loved you less," said he, "I should yield to your reproaches; but I adore you, I will subdue myself. I shall die of grief at being hated by my wife, but I cannot live in the shame of having betrayed her by abandoning her. I took a lively pleasure in giving you an entertainment; you refuse it, because I exclude what is not

worthy to approach you; you thus declare to me hereby that a frivolous world is dearer to you than your husband: it is enough; I will go and give notice that the entertainment will not take place."

Hortensia, moved to the bottom of her soul with what she had just heard, and more touched still with the tears that she had seen trickle from his eyes, recollected herself: "What am I going to persist in?" said she. "Are the people, from whom he wants me to detach myself, my friends? Would they sacrifice the slightest of their interests to me? and yet for them I lose the quiet of my life, I disturb it, I poison it, I renounce everything that can form its happiness. It is spite, it is vanity, that inspire me. Have I even chosen to examine whether my husband was right? I have seen nothing but the humiliation of obeying. But who shall command if it be not the wisest? I am a slave: and who is not so, or who ought not to be so, to their duties? I give the name of tyrant to a man of honour, who conjures me with tears in his eyes to take care of my reputation! Where then is that pride with which I reproach him? Ah! I should perhaps be much to be pitied if he were as weak as I. I afflict him at the very moment when he has shown the most delicate attention to spare me! These are injuries, these are real ones, and not those which I attribute to him."—"Go," said she to one of her women, "go and tell your master that I would speak to him." Scarce had she sent this message, when a sudden qualm seized her. "I am going then," said she, "to consent to mope all my life: for I cannot conceal it from myself, but that there is amusement only in the great world; and all those good folks among whom he wants me to live, have not the charms of Valsain's friends." As this reflection had a little changed the disposition of her soul, she contented herself with telling Lusane that she would willingly give way to him for this once. She excused herself to the people who had asked to be admitted to her ball: and the entertainment, which was

as brilliant as possible, had all the vivacity of joy without tumult and confusion.

"Tell me, now, my dear, if anything has been wanting to our amusement?" said Lusane to Hortensia. "You sometimes disguise," said she to him, "the constraint you put upon me; but entertainments do not come every day. It is in the void and silence of her house that a woman of my age breathes the poison of dulness; and if you would see that poison consume my youth, you will be fully gratified."—"No, madam," said he, penetrated with grief; "I have not that deliberate cruelty of which you suspect me. If I must renounce the care of making you happy, that dear, that pleasing care, which ought to take up my whole life, at least I will not have to reproach myself with having poisoned the happiness of your days. Neither I, nor the virtuous friends I have chosen for you, are enough to make you amends for the sacrifices I occasion you; without that crowd that used to surround you, my house seems to you a dreadful solitude; you have the cruelty to tell me so yourself. I must then restore you to that liberty without which you like nothing. I ask of you but one more act of complaisance: to-morrow I will bring you a new set of company; and if you do not judge them worthy to employ your leisure, if they do not take place of that world, which is so dear to you, all is over, and I give you up to yourself." Hortensia had not much difficulty in granting him what he asked: she was very sure that he had nothing to offer her which was equivalent to her liberty: but it was not purchasing it too dear to submit to this slight trial.

The next day, when she woke, she saw her husband enter with a shining countenance, in which sparkled love and joy. "Here," said he, "is the new company which I propose to you; if you are not satisfied with this, I no longer know how to amuse you." Imagine the surprise of this mother, not insensible to feeling, on seeing before her the two children whom

she had by Valsain. "Children," said Lusane, taking them in his arms in order to lift them to Hortensia's bed, "embrace



"Here," said he, "is the new company which I propose to you."

your mother, and prevail on her tenderness to vouchsafe to share the cares which I shall take to bring you up." Hortensia pressed them to her bosom, and bathed them with her

tears. "Till Nature," continued Lusane, "grant me the title of father, love and friendship give it me, and I shall fulfil its duties."—"Come, my love," said Hortensia, "this is the dearest and tenderest of all your lessons to me. I had forgot that I was a mother, I was going to forget that I was a wife. You recall me to those duties; and these two bands united bind me for all my life."



The Connoisseur.

CÉLICOUR had been from the age of fifteen in his own neighbourhood what is called a little prodigy. He made the most gallant verses in the world: and there was not one handsome woman in the neighbourhood whom he had not celebrated, and who had not discovered that his eyes had still more spirit than his verses. It was a pity to suffer such great talents to lie buried in a little country town: Paris ought to be their theatre, and he managed so well that his father resolved to send him there. This father was an honest man, who loved wit without having any himself, and who admired, without knowing why, everything that came from the capital; he had even some literary relations there, and in the number of his correspondents was a *Connoisseur*, called M. de Fintac. It was to him specially that Célicour was recommended.

Fintac received the son of his friend with a patronising kindness. "Sir," said he, "I have heard of you: I know that

you have been successful in the country; but in the country, believe me, arts and letters are yet in their infancy. Without taste, wit and genius produce nothing but what is deformed, and there is no taste but at Paris. Begin then by persuading yourself that you are but just born, and by forgetting all that you have learnt."—"What would I not forget?" said Célicour, casting his eyes on a niece of eighteen, whom the Connoisseur had with him. "Yes, sir, it is to-day that I begin to live. I know not what charm breathes in these places: but faculties unknown to me before are unfolding themselves: I seem to myself to have acquired new senses, a new soul."—"Good," cried Fintac, "this is enthusiasm: he is born a poet, and from this single stroke I warrant him one."—"There is no poetry in that," replied Célicour; "it is plain and simple nature."—"So much the better! this is true talent. And at what age did you feel yourself animated with this divine fire?"—"Alas, sir, I have had some sparks of it in the country, but I never experienced there the lively and sudden heat which penetrates me at this instant."—"It is the air of Paris," said Fintac.—"It is the air of your house," said Célicour: "I am in the temple of the Muses." The Connoisseur decided that this young man had happy dispositions.

Agatha, the prettiest little piece of archness that Love ever formed, lost not one word of this conversation: and certain sly looks, a certain smile which played on her lips, gave Célicour to understand that she did not mistake the double meaning of his replies. "I am much obliged to your father," added the Connoisseur, "for having sent you hither at an age when the mind is docile enough to receive right impressions; but guard yourself against the wrong ones. You will find at Paris more false connoisseurs than good judges. Do not consult everybody, but stick close to the instruction of a man who has never been mistaken in anything." Célicour, who did not imagine that a man would praise himself with so much openness, had the simplicity to ask who this infallible person was.

"It is I, sir," replied Fintac with a tone of confidence, "I, who have passed my life with all the artists and *literati* of



Certain sly looks, a certain smile which played on her lips, gave Célicour to understand that she did not mistake the double meaning of his replies.

greatest consideration: I, who for these forty years have exercised myself in distinguishing, in things both of fancy and

of taste, real and permanent beauties, from beauties of fashion and of convention. I say it, because it is well known, and there is no vanity in admitting a known fact."

Extraordinary as this language was, Célicour hardly paid any attention to it: he was absorbed by a more interesting object. Agatha had sometimes deigned to lift up her eyes upon him, and those eyes seemed to tell him the most obliging things in the world; but was it their natural vivacity, or the pleasure of seeing their own triumph, that animated them? That was a point to be cleared up. Célicour therefore begged the Connoisseur to allow him the honour of visiting him often, and Fintac himself pressed him to do so.

On his second visit, the young man was obliged to wait till the Connoisseur was visible, and to pass a quarter of an hour *tête-à-tête* with the lovely niece. She made him many excuses, and he replied that there was no occasion for them. "Sir," said Agatha to him, "my uncle is charmed with you."—"That is a very pleasing piece of success for me; but, Mademoiselle, there is one which would touch me still more."—"My uncle says you are formed to succeed in everything."—"Ah! why do not you think the same!"—"I am pretty often of my uncle's opinion."—"Assist me then to merit his kindness." —"You seem to me to want no assistance."—"Pardon me; I know that almost all great men have their singularities, sometimes even their weaknesses. To flatter their tastes, their opinions, their temper, one must know them: to know them one must study them; and, if you please, beautiful Agatha, you can abridge that study for me. After all, what is the point? To gain the good-will of your uncle? Nothing in the world is more innocent."—"Is it then the custom in the country to come to an understanding with the nieces, in order to succeed with the uncles? It is not such a bad way." —"Nothing in it but what is very natural."—"But if my uncle has, as you say, singularities and foibles, must I tell you of them?"—"Why not? Would you suspect me of wanting to

make an ill use of them?"—"No; but his niece . . . !"—"Well, his niece ought to wish that people should endeavour to please him. He is past the time of life in which we correct ourselves; so nothing remains but to humour him."—"An admirable way of removing scruples."—"Ah! you would not have any if you knew me better; but no, you have dissembled."—"Of course, sir; I behold you for the second time; how can I have any secrets from you?"—"I am indiscreet, I confess, and I ask your pardon."—"No, it is I who have been wrong, to let you fancy the thing more serious than it is. The fact is this: my uncle is a good sort of man, and would never have pretended to anything more, if some one had not put it into his head to know everything, to judge of arts and letters, to be the guide, the appraiser, the arbiter of talents. That hurts nobody; but it draws to our house a crowd of blockheads whom my uncle patronises and with whom he shares the ridicule of being a wit. It were much to be wished for his own ease that he would abandon this chimera; for the public seem to have made it their business never to be of his opinion, and we have every day some new scene."—"You afflict me."—"You are now in possession of all the secrets of the family, and we have nothing more to conceal from you." Just as she finished, word was brought to Célicour that the Connoisseur was visible.

The cabinet into which he was introduced announced the multiplicity of Fintac's studies and the variety of his knowledge; the floor was covered with folios piled up on one another in the utmost confusion, rolls of prints, maps lying open, and manuscripts jumbled together; on a table, a Tacitus open near a sepulchral lamp surrounded by antique medals; farther off, a telescope on its carriage, the sketch of a picture on the easel, the model of a bas-relief in wax, scraps of natural history; and from floor to ceiling, shelves full of books in picturesque disorder. The young man knew not where to set his foot, and his embarrassment gave the Connoisseur infinite

pleasure. "Forgive," said he to him, "the confusion in which you find me: this is my study, I have occasion for all these things at hand. But do not imagine that the same disorder reigns in my head: everything there is in its place; variety, nay number itself, causes no confusion there."—"Wonderful!" said Célicour, who knew not what he said, for his thoughts were still on Agatha. "Oh, very wonderful," replied Fintac; "and I am often surprised myself when I reflect on the mechanism of memory, and the manner in which ideas class and arrange themselves as fast as they arise: it seems as if there were drawers for every different kind of knowledge. For example, across the multitude of things which have passed through my imagination, who will explain to me how I came to retrace in my memory, at a given point, what I had formerly read on the return of the comet? for you are to know that it was I who gave the signal to our astronomers."—"You, sir?"—"They never thought of it, and, but for me, the comet had passed *incognito* over our horizon. I have not boasted of it, as you may well suppose: I tell it you in confidence."—"And why suffer yourself to be deprived of the glory of so important a piece of intelligence?"—"Good! I should never have done if I were to lay claim to all that they steal from me. In general, my lad, take it for granted that the solution of a problem, a discovery, a piece of poetry, of painting, or of eloquence, belongs not, so much as is imagined, to the person who takes the credit of it to himself. But what is the object of a connoisseur? To encourage talents at the same time that he enlightens them.—Whether the idea of this bas-relief, the composition of this picture, the beauties of the parts, or the whole of this play, be the artist's or mine, is matter of indifference to the progress of art; and *that* is all my concern. They come, I tell them my thoughts; they listen to me, they make their advantage of it. 'Tis excellent: I am recompensed when they have succeeded."

"Nothing can be finer," said Célicour: "the arts ought to

regard you as their Apollo. And does Mademoiselle Agatha also condescend to be their Muse?"—"No, my niece is a madcap, whom I tried to bring up with care; but she has no taste for study. I had induced her to cast her eye over history; she returned me my books, saying that it was not worth while to read, for the sake of seeing in all ages illustrious madmen and impudent rogues making fools of the multitude. I wanted to try if she had a greater taste for eloquence; she maintained that Cicero, Demosthenes, &c., were only dexterous jugglers; and that when a man had good reasons, there was no need of so many words. As for moral philosophy she declares that she knows it all by heart, and that Lucas, her foster-father, is as wise as Socrates. There is nothing therefore but poetry that amuses her sometimes; and then she prefers fables to the more sublime poems, and tells you plainly that she had rather hear La Fontaine's animals speak, than the heroes of Virgil and Homer. In a word, she is as much a child at eighteen as at twelve: and in the midst of the most serious, the most interesting conversations, you would be surprised to see her amusing herself with a trifle, or growing dull the moment one would fix her attention." Célicour, laughing to himself, took leave of M. de Fintac, who did him the favour to invite him to dine with him next day.

The young man was so transported that he slept not that night. To dine with Agatha! it was the happiest day of his life. He arrived, and by his beauty, by his youth, by the air of serenity diffused over his countenance, he might have seemed an apparition of Apollo, if Fintac's Parnassus had been better composed; but as he wanted none but dependents and flatterers, he drew to his house only such persons as were fit to be so.

He introduced Célicour to them as a young poet of the greatest promise, and made him take his place at table at his right hand. From that moment behold all the eyes of envy fixed upon him. Each of the guests thought he saw

his own place usurped, and swore at the bottom of his soul to take revenge on him by decrying the first work he should publish. In the meantime Célicour was graciously received and caressed by all these gentlemen, and took them from that instant for the best fellows in the world. A new-comer excited emulation. Wit hoisted all her sails: they judged the republic of letters: and as it is just to mingle commendation with criticism, they praised all the dead generously and tore in pieces the living, the present company always excepted. All the new works, which had succeeded without passing under the inspection of Fintac, could but have their day, and that a short one; all those to which he had given the seal of his approbation, were to attain to immortality, whatever the present age thought of them. They ran through all kinds of literature; and in order to give more scope to erudition and criticism, they brought on the carpet this entirely new question, viz., "Which merited the preference, Corneille or Racine?" They were now saying the finest things in the world on the subject, when the little niece, who had not spoken a word, took it into her head to ask simply which of the two fruits, the orange or the peach, had the most exquisite taste, and merited the most commendation.

Her uncle blushed at her simplicity, and the guests all looked down without deigning to reply to this idle foolery. "Niece," said Fintac, "at your age one should hear and hold one's tongue." Agatha, with an imperceptible half-smile, looked at Célicour, who had understood her perfectly well, and whose glance consoled her for the contempt of the company. I forgot to mention that he was placed opposite to her, and you may easily imagine that he listened very little to what was said around him. But the Connoisseur, who examined his countenance, perceived in it a very extraordinary fire. "See," said he to the wits around him, "see how talent forces its way."—"Yes," replied one of them, "we see it transpire like water through the pores of an eolipile." Fintac,

taking Célicour by the hand, said to him, "There is a comparison for you! Poetry and philosophy blended together! It is thus that the talents border on each other, and that the Muses join hands. Confess," continued he, "that such dinners are not found in your country-towns, and yet what you see is nothing: there are days when these gentlemen have even an hundred times more wit."—"It would be hard not to have it," said one of them: "we are at the fountain-head, *et purpureo bibimus ore nectar.*"—"Ah! *purpureo!*" replied Fintac modestly; "you do me a great deal of honour. Listen, young man, and learn how to quote." The young man was chiefly attentive to catch the glances of Agatha, who on her side thought him very handsome.

On rising from table, they went to walk in the garden, where the Connoisseur had taken care to get together the rare plants that one sees everywhere. He had, among other wonders, a parti-coloured cabbage, which drew the admiration of naturalists. Its folds, its festoon, the mixture of its colours were the most astonishing thing in the world. "Let them show," said Fintac, "a foreign plant which Nature has taken the trouble to form with more labour and delicacy. It is for the sake of avenging Europe on the prejudice of certain *virtuosi* in favour of everything that comes from the Indies and the New World, that I have preserved this fine cabbage."

While they were admiring this prodigy, Agatha and Célicour had joined each other, as it were, without intending it, in a neighbouring walk. "Beautiful Agatha," said the young man, showing her a rose, "would you let this flower die on the stalk?"—"Where then would you have it die?"—"Where I would die myself." Agatha blushed at this answer; and in that instant her uncle, with two wits, came and seated himself in an adjacent arbour, wherefrom, without being perceived, he could overhear them. "If it is true," continued Célicour, "that souls pass from one body into another, I would after my death be such a rose as that. If any profane hand advances

to gather me, I will conceal myself amid the prickles; but if some charming nymph deigns to cast her eyes on me, I will lean towards her, expand my bosom, exhale my perfumes, mingle them with her breath; and the desire of pleasing her shall animate my colours."—"Very well, you will succeed in being plucked off your stalk, and the moment after you will be no more."—"Ah, Mademoiselle, do you consider as nothing the happiness of being for one moment . . ." His eyes finished the speech his mouth had begun. "And I," said Agatha, disguising her confusion, "if I had my choice, would wish to be changed into a dove, which is gentleness and innocence itself."—"You may add tenderness and fidelity: yes, beautiful Agatha, the choice is worthy of you. The dove is the bird of Venus; Venus would distinguish you among your fellows; you would be the ornament of her car: Love would repose himself on your wings, or rather he would cherish you in his bosom. It would be from his divine mouth that your bill would take ambrosia." Agatha interrupted him, saying that he carried his fictions too far. "One word more," said Célicour: "a dove has a mate; if it depended on you to choose yours, what kind of a soul would you give him?"—"That of a she-friend," replied she. At these words Célicour looked on her with two eyes, in which were painted love, reproach, and grief.

"Excellent!" said the uncle, getting up, "excellent! there is fine and good poetry for you. The image of the rose is of a freshness worthy Van-huysum, that of the dove is a little picture of Boucher, the freshest, the most gallant in the world, *ut pictura poesis*. Courage, my lad, courage! the allegory is extremely well kept up; we shall make something of you. Agatha, I have been pretty well pleased with your dialogue, and here is M. de Lexergue, who is as much surprised at it as I."—"It is certain," said M. de Lexergue, "that there is in Miss's language something Anacreontic: it is the impression of her uncle's taste; he says nothing which is not stamped with the mark of sound antiquity." M. Lucide found in

Célicour's fictions the *molle atque facetum*. "We must conclude this little scene," said Fintac; "we must put it into verse, it will be one of the prettiest things ever seen." Célicour said, that in order to complete it, he stood in need of Agatha's assistance; and, that the dialogue might have more ease and freedom, they thought it right to leave them alone.

"To the dove, your mate, *the soul of a she-friend!*" resumed Célicour. "Ah, beautiful Agatha, is your heart made only for friendship? Is it for this, that love has delighted to assemble in you so many charms?"—"There now," said Agatha, smiling, "the dialogue is excellently renewed. I have but to return the ball: there is matter enough to carry us a great way."—"If you please," said Célicour, "it is easy to abridge it."—"Let us talk of something else," interrupted she. "Did the dinner amuse you?"—"I heard but one single word there, a word full of sense and neatness, which they had the folly to take for an artless question: all the rest escaped me. My soul was not at my ear."—"It was very lucky!"—"Ah, very! for it was in my eyes."—"If I pleased, I might pretend not to hear, or not to understand you; but I never make believe. I think it then very natural, under favour of our wits, that you should take more pleasure in looking at me than in listening to them; and I confess to you, in my turn, that I am not sorry to have some one to speak to, though it were only with the eyes, to save me from the spleen they give me. So we understand each other, and we shall amuse ourselves, for we have here originals, entertaining enough in their kind.

"For example, this M. Lucide thinks he always sees in things what nobody else has perceived in them. It appears that nature has told her secrets in his ear; but everybody is not worthy to know what he thinks. He chooses out of the circle a privileged confidant. This is commonly the most distinguished person; he leans mysteriously towards that person and whispers his opinion. As for M. de Lexergue, he is a scholar of the first class: full of contempt for everything modern,

he esteems things by the number of centuries they have seen. He would choose even that a young woman should have the air of antiquity, and he honours me with his attention, because he thinks I have the profile of the Empress Poppæa. In the group which you see yonder is an upright starch man, who makes pretty little nothings; but it is not every one who can understand them. He demands a day for reading; he names his auditory himself; he requires that the gate should be shut against every profane person; he arrives on his tip-toes, places himself before a table between two flambeaux; draws mysteriously out of his pocket a rose-coloured portfolio; throws around him a gracious look, which demands silence; announces a little romance of his own making, which has had the good fortune to please some persons of consideration; reads it deliberately, in order to be the better tasted, and goes quite to the end, without perceiving that everybody yawns at him. That little fidgeting man near him, so full of gesticulation, excites a pity in me which I am not able to express. Wit is to him like those sneezes which are going to come, but never do come. We see him dying with the desire of saying fine things: he has them at his tongue's end; but they seem to escape him the moment he is going to catch them. Ah! he is a man much to be pitied! That dry and tall man who walks alone, apart from them, is the most thoughtful and most empty person I know: because he has a bob-wig, and the vapours, he thinks himself an English philosopher: he can be ponderous on a fly's wing, and is so obscure in his ideas, that one is sometimes tempted to think him profound." While Agatha's wit was exercising itself on these characters, Célicour had his eyes fixed on hers. "Ah!" said he, "that your uncle, who knows so many things, should know so little of his niece's understanding! he represents you as a child!"—"Oh, to be sure, and these gentlemen all consider me as such. Accordingly they put no restraint upon themselves, and the absurdity of wit is quite at its ease with me. Do not go and betray me now."—

"Never fear; but we must, beautiful Agatha, cement our understanding by stricter ties than those of friendship."—"You do injustice to friendship," replied Agatha; "there is something sweeter perhaps; but there is nothing more solid."

At these words they were interrupted, and the Connoisseur walking alone with Célicour, asked him if the dialogue with his niece had come off well. "It is not precisely what I wanted," said the young man, "but I will endeavour to supply what is lacking."—"I am sorry," says Fintac, "that we interrupted you. Nothing is so difficult as to recover the natural thread, when once we let it escape. This giddy girl has not caught your idea. She has sometimes glimmerings; but all on a sudden they vanish. I hope, at least, that marriage will form her."—"You think then of marrying her?" demanded Célicour, with a faltering voice. "Yes," replied Fintac, "and I depend upon you for the worthy celebration of that festival. You have seen M. de Lexergue; he is a man of great sense and profound erudition. It is to him that I am giving my niece." If Fintac had observed Célicour's countenance, he would have seen it grow pale at this news. "A man so serious, and so full of application, as M. de Lexergue, has need," continued he, "of something to distract him. He is rich; he has taken a liking to this girl: and in a week's time he is to marry her; but he exacts the greatest secrecy, and my niece herself knows nothing of it yet. As for you, it is highly necessary that you should be initiated into the mystery of an union which you are to celebrate. *O Hymen! ô Hymenæe!* you understand me. It is an epithalamium that I ask of you, and here is an opportunity to signalise yourself."—"Ah! sir . . ."—"No modesty: it smothers all talents."—"Excuse me."—"You shall execute it: it is a piece in your own way, and which will do you a great deal of honour. My niece is young and handsome, and with imagination and soul, such a subject is inexhaustible. With respect to the bridegroom, I have already told you, he is an extraordinary man. Nobody is so-

knowing in antiques. He has a cabinet of medals which he values at forty thousand crowns. He was even going to see the ruins of Herculaneum, and was very near making a voyage to Palmyra. You see how many images all this presents to poetry. But you are ruminating upon it already; yes, I see on your countenance that profound meditation which hatches the germs of genius, and disposes them to fruitfulness. Go then, go and profit by such precious moments. I also am about to bury myself in study."

Seized with consternation at what he had just heard, Célicour burned with impatience to see Agatha again. The next day he made a pretence to go and consult the Connoisseur; and before he entered the study, he asked if she was to be seen. "Ah! Mademoiselle," said he to her, "you see a man driven to despair."—"What ails you?"—"I am undone: you are to marry M. de Lexergue."—"Who has told you that story?"—"Who? M. de Fintac himself."—"Seriously?"—"He has charged me to write your epithalamium."—"Very well; will it be a pretty one?"—"You laugh! you think it amusing to have M. de Lexergue for a husband!"—"Oh! very amusing!"—"Ah! at least, cruel maid, in pity to me who adore you, and who am to lose you . . .!" Agatha interrupted him as he fell on his knees. "Confess," said she to him, "that these moments of excitement are convenient for a declaration: as the person that makes it is not himself, so she who hears him dares not complain, and, by favour of this disorder, love thinks it may risk everything. But softly, moderate yourself, and let us see what distracts you."—"Your tranquillity, cruel that you are."—"So you would have me afflict myself at a misfortune which I am not afraid of?"—"I tell you, that it is determined that you shall marry M. de Lexergue."—"How would you have them determine, without me, on that which, without me, cannot be put in execution?"—"But if your uncle has given his word?"—"If he has given it, he shall retract it."—"What, you have the courage!"—

"The courage not to say *yes!* a fine effort of resolution truly!"—"Ah! I am at the summit of joy!"—"And your joy is a folly as well as your grief."—"You will not be M. de Lexergue's!"—"Well, what then?"—"You will be mine."—"Oh! to be sure, there is no medium, and every woman who will not be his wife will be yours: that is clear. Indeed you argue like a country poet. Go, go see my affectionate uncle, and take care that he has no suspicion of the information that you have given me."

"Well, is the epithalamium in forwardness?" said the Connoisseur to him, as soon as he came into his presence. "I have the plan in my head."—"Let us see!"—"I have adopted the allegory of Time espousing Truth."—"The thought is beautiful; but it is gloomy; and besides, Time is very old."—"M. de Lexergue is an antiquary."—"True; but we don't love to be told that we are as old as Time."—"Would you like the nuptials of Venus and Vulcan better?"—"Vulcan? on account of the bronzes and the medals? But no: that little matter of Mars is too disagreeable to recall. You will hit, with consideration, on some still more happy thought.—But *à propos* of Vulcan, will you come this evening with us to see the first attempt of a fire-work maker whom I patronise? It is some Chinese rockets, of which I have given him the composition; I have even added something to it; for I must always put in something of my own." Célicour doubted not but Agatha would be of the party, and repaired thither with eagerness.

The spectators were seated; Fintac and his niece took up one window, and there remained at Agatha's side a small space, which she had contrived to leave vacant. Célicour stole timorously into it, and shuddered with joy on seeing himself so close to Agatha. The uncle's eyes were attentive to follow the flight of the rockets; Célicour's were fixed upon the niece. The stars might have fallen from the heavens, and not have disturbed him. On the sill of the window his

hand met a hand softer than the down of flowers; a trembling seized him, which Agatha must have perceived. The hand he scarce touched made a motion to withdraw itself; his made one to retain it; Agatha's eyes turned upon him, and met his, which asked for pardon. She perceived that she should afflict him by withdrawing that dear hand, and whether through weakness or pity, she thought proper to leave it immovable. This was a great deal, but not quite enough: Agatha's hand was shut, and Célicour's could not clasp it. Love inspired him with the courage to open it. Gods! what was his surprise and joy, when he found it yield insensibly to this soft violence! He holds Agatha's hand open in his, he presses it amorously; conceive his felicity! It is not yet perfect: the hand he presses replies not to his; he draws it towards him, bends towards her, and dares to rest it on his heart, which advances to meet it. It tries to get from him, he stops it, he holds it captive; and love knows with what rapidity his heart beats under this timid hand. The heart is as a loadstone to the hand. O triumph! O rapture! It is no longer Célicour that presses it; it is the hand itself that answers the beating of Célicour's heart. Those who have never loved have never known this emotion, and even those who have loved have never tasted it but once. Their looks mingled with that touching languor, which is the sweetest of all declarations, as the cluster of fireworks displayed itself in the air. Then Agatha's hand made a new effort to impress itself on the heart of Célicour; and while around them the company applauded the glittering beauty of the rockets, our lovers, taken up with themselves, expressed by burning sighs the regret of separation. Such was this dumb scene, worthy to be cited among the examples of eloquent silence.

From this moment their hearts understood each other, and there was no longer any secret between them: both tasted for the first time the pleasure of loving, and this blossom of sensibility is the purest essence of the soul. But love, which

takes the complexion of characters, was timid and serious in Célicour; lively, joyous, and arch, in Agatha.

However, the day appointed for informing her of her marriage with M. de Lexergue arrived. The antiquary came to see her, found her alone, and made her a declaration of his love founded on the consent of her uncle. "I know," said she, rallying, "that you love me in profile; but for my part, I should like a husband that I could love full face, and to speak frankly, you are not the thing for me. You have, you say, my uncle's consent; but you shall not marry me without my own, and I believe I may assure you that you will not have it as long as I live." In vain did Lexergue protest to her that she united in his eyes more charms than the Venus de Medicis; Agatha wished him antique Venuses, and assured him that she was not one. "You have your choice," said she to him, "to expose me, to displease my uncle, or to spare me that chagrin. You will afflict me in charging me with the rupture, you will oblige me by taking it upon yourself; and the best thing we can do when we are not loved, is to endeavour not to be hated. And so I am your very humble servant."

The antiquary was mortally offended at Agatha's refusal; but out of pride he would have concealed it, if the reproach cast upon him that he had failed in his word had not extorted the confession. Fintac, whose authority and consideration were now brought into question, was enraged at the opposition of his niece, and did all that was possible to conquer it; but he never could draw from her any other answer but that she was no medal, and he concluded by telling her in his passion, that she should never have any other husband. This was not the only obstacle to the happiness of our lovers. Célicour could hope for only part of a small inheritance; and Agatha was entirely dependent on her uncle, who was now less than ever disposed to strip himself of his wealth for her. In happier times he might have taken upon him the burden of their household; but after this refusal of Agatha's, it required a

little miracle to engage him to it, and it was Love himself that wrought this.

"Flatter my uncle," said Agatha to Célicour, "intoxicate him with encomiums, and carefully conceal our love from him. For that purpose let us diligently avoid being found together, and content yourself with informing me of your conduct *en passant.*" Fintac dissembled not to Célicour his resentment against his niece. "Can she have," said he, "any secret inclination? If I knew it . . . But no, she is a little fool, who loves nothing, and feels nothing. Ah! if she reckons upon my inheritance, she is mistaken: I know better how to dispose of my favours." The young man, terrified at the menaces of the uncle, took the first opportunity to inform the niece of it. She only joked on the occasion.—"He is raving mad against you, my dear Agatha."—"That is quite indifferent to me."—"He says he will disinherit you."—"Say as he says, gain his confidence, and leave the rest to Love and Time." Célicour followed Agatha's advice, and at every commendation that he bestowed on Fintac, Fintac thought he discovered in him a new degree of merit. "The justness of understanding, the penetration of this young man is without example at his age," said he to his friends. At last the confidence he placed in him was such, that he thought he could trust him with what he called the secret of his life. This was a dramatic piece which he had composed, and which he had not had the resolution to read to any one, for fear of risking his reputation. After demanding inviolable secrecy, he appointed the time for reading it. At this news Agatha was transported with joy. "That is well," said she: "courage; redouble the dose of incense; good or bad, in your eyes this piece has no equal."

Fintac, *tête-à-tête* with the young man, after double-locking his study door, drew the precious manuscript out of a casket, and read with enthusiasm the coldest, the most insipid comedy that ever was written. It cost the young man dear to applaud

such flat stuff; but Agatha had recommended it to him. He applauded it therefore, and the Connoisseur was transported. "Confess," said he to him, after reading it, "confess that this is fine."—"Oh, very fine."—"Very well, it is time to tell you, then, why I have chosen you for my only confident. I have burnt with desire this great while to see the piece on the stage, but I would not have it go under my name." (Célicour trembled at these words.) "I was unwilling to trust anybody; but to cut matters short, I think you worthy of this mark of my friendship: you shall present my work as your own; I will have nothing but the pleasure of the success, and I leave the glory of it to you." The thought of imposing upon the public would by itself have terrified the young man, but that of seeing the appearance and the damnation, under his own name, of so contemptible a work, shocked him still more. Confounded at the proposal, he withstood it a long time, but his opposition was to no purpose. "The confiding of my secret," said Fintac, "engages you in honour to grant me what I ask. It is indifferent to the public whether the piece be yours or mine, and this friendly imposition can hurt nobody. My piece is my treasure, I make you a present of it: the very remotest posterity will know nothing of the truth. Here then your delicacy is spared every way: if, after this, you refuse to present this work as your own, I shall think that you do not like it, that you only deceive me in praising it, and that you are equally unworthy of my friendship and esteem." What would not Agatha's lover resolve upon rather than incur the hatred of her uncle? He assured him that he was only restrained by laudable motives, and asked twenty-four hours to determine. "He has read it to me," said he to Agatha.—"Well?"—"Well, it is execrable."—"I thought so."—"He wants me to bring it on the stage in my name."—"What?"—"To have it pass for mine."—"Ah, Célicour, heaven be praised! Have you accepted it?"—"Not yet, but I shall be forced to do so."—"So much the better!"—"I tell you it is detestable."—

"So much the better."—"It will be damned."—"So much the better, I tell you; we must submit to everything."

Célicour did not sleep that night for vexation; but the next day he went to the uncle, and told him that there was nothing which he would not resolve upon sooner than displease him. "I would not expose you rashly," said the Connoisseur; "copy out the piece with your own hand, you shall read it to our friends, who are excellent judges, and if they do not think the success infallible, you shall not be bound to anything. I require only one thing of you; and that is to study it, in order to read it well." This precaution gave the young man some hope. "I am," said he to Agatha, "to read the piece to his friends; if they think it bad, he excuses me from bringing it out."—"They will think it good, and so much the better: we should be undone if they were to dislike it."—"Explain yourself."—"Get you gone, they must not see us together." What she had foreseen came to pass. The judges being assembled, the Connoisseur announced this piece as a prodigy, especially in a young poet. The young poet read his best; and after Fintac's example, they were in ecstasies at every line, and applauded every scene. At the conclusion they clapped and huzzaed; they discovered in it the delicacy of Aristophanes, the elegance of Plautus, the comic force of Terence, and they knew no piece of Molière fit to be set in competition with this.

After this trial there was no room to hesitate. The players were not of the same opinion with the wits; but they knew beforehand that these good people had no taste, and there was an order to perform the piece. Agatha, who had been present at the reading, had applauded it with all her might; there were even pathetic passages at which she appeared to be moved, and her enthusiasm for the work had a little reconciled her with the author. "Can it be possible," said Célicour to her, "that you thought that good?"—"Excellent," said she, "excellent for us;" and at these words she left him without saying another word. While the piece was in rehearsal, Fintac

ran from house to house to dispose the wits in favour of a young poet of such great expectations. At last the great day arrived, and the Connoisseur assembled his friends to dinner. "Let us go, gentlemen," said he, "to support your own performance. You have judged the piece admirable, you have warranted its success, and your honour is concerned. As for me, you know how great my weakness is: I have the bowels of a father for all rising geniuses, and I feel in as lively a manner as themselves the uneasiness they suffer at these terrible moments."

After dinner, the good friends of the Connoisseur tenderly embraced Célicour, and told him that they were going into the pit to be the witnesses rather than the instruments of his triumph. They repaired thither; the piece was played; it did not go through, and the first mark of impatience was given by these good friends.

Fintac was in the house, trembling and pale as death; but all the time that the play lasted, this unhappy and tender father made incredible efforts to encourage the spectators to succour his child. At last he saw it expire, and then sinking beneath his grief, dragged himself to his coach, confounded, dejected, and murmuring against Heaven for having been born in so barbarous an age. And where was poor Célicour? Alas, they had granted him the honours of a latticed box, where, sitting on thorns, he had seen what they called his piece, tottering in the first act, stumbling in the second, and damned in the third. Fintac had promised to go and fetch him, but had forgot it. What was now to become of him? how was he to escape through that multitude who would not fail to know him again, and to point him out with the finger? At last, seeing the front of the house empty, he took courage and descended; but the crush-room, the galleries, the stairs were yet full; his consternation made him be taken notice of, and he heard on all sides, "It is he without doubt; yes, there he is; that is he. Poor wretch! It is pity! He will do better

another time." He perceived in a corner a group of damned authors cracking jests on their companion. He saw also the good friends of Fintac, who triumphed in his fall, and on seeing him turned their backs upon him.

Overwhelmed with confusion and grief, he repaired to the true author's, and his first care was to ask for Agatha: he had entire liberty of seeing her, for her uncle had shut himself up in his closet. "I forewarned you of it: it is damned, and damned shamefully," said Célicour, throwing himself into a chair. "So much the better!" said Agatha. "What, so much the better! when your lover is covered with shame, and makes himself, in order to please you, the talk and ridicule of all Paris? Ah, it is too much. No, Mademoiselle, it is no longer time to jest. I love you more than my life; but in the state of humiliation in which you now see me, I am capable of renouncing both life and yourself. I don't know how it has happened that the secret has not escaped me. It is but little to expose myself to the contempt of the public; your cruel uncle will abandon me! I know him, he will be the first to blush at seeing me again; and what I have done to obtain you, perhaps, cuts off my hope for ever. Let him prepare, however, to acknowledge his piece, or to give me your hand. There is but one way to console me, and to oblige me to silence. Heaven is my witness, that if by an impossibility his work had succeeded, I should have given him the honour of it; it is damned, and I bear the shame; but it is an effort of love for which you alone can be the recompense."—"It must be confessed," said the wicked Agatha, in order to irritate him still more, "that it is a cruel thing to see one's self hissed for another."—"Cruel to such a degree that I would not play such a part for my own father."—"With what an air of contempt they see a wretch whose play is damned pass along!"—"The contempt is unjust, that is one comfort; but insolent pity, that is the mortification."—"I suppose you were greatly confused in coming downstairs! Did you salute the ladies?"—"I could have

wished to annihilate myself."—"Poor boy! and how will you dare to appear in the world again?"—"I will never appear



"What, so much the better! when your lover is covered with shame, and makes himself, in order to please you, the talk and ridicule of all Paris?"

again, I swear to you, but with the name of your husband, or till after I have retorted the humiliation of this failure on M.

de Fintac."—"You are resolved then to bring him to bay?"—"Fully resolved, do not doubt it. Let him determine this very evening. If he refuses me your hand, all the newspapers shall publish that he is the author of the damned piece."—"And that is what I wanted," said Agatha with triumph; "there is the object of all those *so much the betters* which put you so much out of patience.—Go to my uncle; hold firm, and be assured that we shall be happy."

"Well, sir, and what say you to it?" demanded Célicour of the Connoisseur. "I say, my friend, that the public is a stupid animal, and that we must renounce all labour for it. But console yourself: your work does you honour in the opinion of men of taste."—"My work? it is all yours."—"Talk lower, I beseech you, my dear lad, talk lower."—"It is very easy for you to moderate yourself, sir, you who have prudently saved yourself from the fall of your piece; but I whom it crushes . . ."—"Ah! do not think that such a fall does you any injury. Enlightened persons have discerned strokes that proclaim genius in this work."—"No, sir, I do not flatter myself; the piece is bad: I have purchased the right of speaking of it with freedom, and all the world is of the same opinion. If it had succeeded, I should have declared that it was yours; if it had been but partly condemned, I should have taken it upon myself; but so thorough a damnation is above my strength, and I beg of you to take the burden upon yourself."—"I, child! I, in the evening of my days, to incur this ridicule! To lose in one day a respect which is the work of forty years, and which forms the hope of my old age! would you have the cruelty to require it?"—"Have not you the cruelty to make me the victim of my complaisance? You know how much it has cost me."—"I know all that I owe to you; but, my dear Célicour, you are young, you have time enough to take your revenge, and there needs but one instance of success to make you forget this misfortune: in the name of friendship support it with constancy; I conjure you with tears in my eyes."

"I consent, sir, but I perceive the consequences of this first essay too well to expose myself to the prejudice which it leaves behind it: I renounce the theatre, poetry, belles-lettres."—"Well, you are in the right: for a young man of your age there are many other objects of ambition."—"There is but one for me, sir, and that depends on you."—"Speak: there is no service which I would not do you: what do you require?"—"Your niece's hand."—"Agatha's hand!"—"Yes, I adore her, and it was she, who to please you made me consent to everything that you desired."—"My niece in the secret?"—"Yes, sir."—"Ah! her giddiness will perhaps . . . Hola! somebody: run to my niece, and bid her come here."—"Compose yourself: Agatha is less a child, less giddy than she appears."—"Ah! you make me tremble. . . . My dear Agatha, you know what has passed, and the misfortune which has just happened."—"Yes, uncle."—"Have you revealed this fatal secret to any one?"—"To nobody in the world."—"Can I thoroughly depend upon it?"—"Yes, I swear to you."—"Well then, my children, let it die with us three: I ask it of you as I would ask my life. Agatha, Célicour loves you; he renounces, out of friendship to me, the theatre, poetry, letters, and I owe him your hand as the price of so great a sacrifice."—"He is too well paid," cried Célicour, seizing Agatha's hand.—"I marry an unsuccessful author!" said she, smiling; "but I engage to console him for his misfortune. The worst of the matter is, that they may deny him wit, and so many honest people get on without it! And now, my dear uncle, while Célicour renounces the glory of being a poet, had not you as well renounce that of being a Connoisseur? You will be a great deal the easier."

Agatha was interrupted by the arrival of Clement, the faithful valet of her uncle. "Ah, sir," said he quite out of breath, "your friends! your good friends!"—"Well, Clement?"—"I was in the pit, they were all there."—"I know it. Did they applaud?"—"Applaud! the traitors! If you had seen with

what fury they mangled this unfortunate young man! I beg, sir, you will discharge me, if such people are ever to enter your house again."—"Ah, the scoundrels!" said Fintac. "Yes, it is all over, I will burn my books, and break off all commerce with men of letters."—"Keep your books for your amusement," said Agatha, kissing her uncle; "and as for men of letters, try to make nothing but friends of them, and you will find some worthy of esteem."

Note to "THE CONNOISSEUR"

P. 213.—*Eolipile.*

This, which pleased the fancy of the eighteenth century for "philosophic" toys, which immediately suggested Barker's water-mill, and which was not without its influence on the steam-engine proper, was itself a steam-engine, invented, or first described, by Hero of Alexandria, two hundred years before Christ. Steam issuing from bent tubes that projected from a suspended metal cylinder or ball made the ball itself revolve.



THE misfortune incident to a father employed in amassing a fortune for his children is not to be able to watch in person over their education, a point of still more consequence than their fortune. The young Timantes, called M. de Volny, had received from nature an agreeable figure, an easy temper, a good heart; but thanks to the cares of his lady mother, this happy disposition was soon spoiled, and the most agreeable child in the world at six years old became a little coxcomb at fifteen. They gave him all the frivolous accomplishments, and not one of the useful: for what did he want with the latter? Useful knowledge might be well enough for a man like his father, who had been obliged to labour to enrich himself: but he who found his fortune made, need only know how to enjoy it nobly. He had had it laid down as a maxim that he was never to live with his equals; accordingly he saw none but young people, who being superior to him in birth, pardoned his being richer than they, provided he paid for their pleasures.

His father would not have had the complaisance to furnish supplies for his liberalities; but his mother did honour to them all. She was not ignorant that at the age of nineteen, he had, according to the genteel custom, a bachelor establishment, and a handsome mistress: but some things in him must be winked at. She required only that he should observe a little secrecy, for fear that the elder Timantes, who did not *know the world*, should take it ill that his son amused himself. If in the intervals of his labour the father showed any uneasiness on account of the dissipated life which this young man led, the mother was at hand to justify him, and complaisant falsehoods were never wanting on occasion. Timantes had the pleasure to hear it said, that nobody at the ball had danced like his son. "It is a great comfort," said the good man, "to have given one's self so much trouble for a son who dances well." He did not conceive the necessity of this little signior's having lacqueys so finely dressed, and such a brilliant equipage; but his lady-wife represented to him, that respect depended on it, and that in order to succeed in the world, one must be on a certain footing. If he asked why his son came home so late, "It was," she told him, "because women of quality do not go to bed sooner." He did not think these reasons very good; but for the sake of peace, he was obliged to put up with them. —Meanwhile his son was plunging headlong into the dissipations of his age, when love seemed to take pity on him, and to undertake his reformation.

His sister Lucy had had, for some little time past, a charming companion in her convent. Angelica had lost her mother; and being too young to keep house, she had prevailed upon her father to do without her, till he should dispose of her hand.

Conformity of age and condition, and, still more, that of tempers, soon united Angelica and Lucy. The latter, in wiping away the tears of her companion, appeared so sensible of her loss that Angelica no longer observed any reserve in

the effusion of her grief. "I have lost," said she to her, "the best mother that ever lived. Since I have had the use of my reason, I have found in her a friend, and a friend so intimate that if my heart and her virtues had not continually recalled to my mind the respect which I owed her, her familiarity would have made me forget it. She always disguised her instructions under an air of merriment; and what instructions, my dear Lucy! those of wisdom itself. With what strokes was this world, in which I was to live, painted to my astonished eyes! What charms did she give to the pure and modest manners of which she was a living example! Ah, under her enchanting pencil all the virtues became Graces." Thus did this amiable daughter, speaking of her mother, continually mingle the most touching eulogies with the most tender regret; but her understanding and her soul paid still more worthy testimony to the person who had formed them.—If any one about her wanted those comforts which affluence bestows, Angelica deprived herself of them with joy: her sacrifices cost her only the trouble of concealing them, and the need to oblige was the only need she knew. "Do you think like me?" said she sometimes to Lucy. "As I am more lucky than our companions, that inequality mortifies me, and I blush for Fortune, who has distributed her gifts so ill. If anything makes the unhappy amends, it is that they are pitied and beloved; whereas to us, who ought to be envied, it is made a favour if people do not hate us. We ought therefore to be very attentive to make our companions forget, by beneficence and modesty, this dangerous advantage that we have over them."

Lucy, charmed with the disposition of Angelica, could have wished to attach herself to her by all the bands of affection. "My dear friend," said she to her one day, "we touch perhaps on the moment when we may be separated for ever: this idea is the sole unhappiness of my life; but I have another, if you did but approve of it. . . . I want to show you

my brother: he is beautiful as the day, a very picture, and well accomplished." — "He is very young," said Angelica, "and very much in the world for his age! I am afraid your mother has been too fond of him."

Volny having come to see Lucy, she prevailed upon her friend to accompany her to the parlour. "Ah, my sister, what charms!" cried the young coxcomb. "Never was so much beauty: what features, what a figure, what eyes! You in a convent, Mademoiselle! It is robbery, treason."—"I foresaw," said Lucy, "that you would be transported: and yet her soul is a thousand times more beautiful."—"Sister, she has the look of the Marchioness of Alcine, whom I handed yesterday out of the opera. They cry up the figure of the Countess of Flavel, with whom I am to sup this evening; but there is no comparison between her person and this lady's; and though I am the intimate friend of the young Madame de Blane, who passes for the beauty of the day, I will lay a thousand to one that your friend will eclipse her when she comes out into the world."

While Volny spoke thus, Angelica viewed him with eyes of pity. "Sir," said she to him, "it does not occur to you that your praises are insults. Know then that the first sentiment that a virtuous woman ought to inspire, is the fear of wounding her modesty, and that it is not permitted to praise without reserve any but persons without shame."—"There are transports of surprise which we cannot master," replied Volny, a little confused.—"When respect accompanies them, it prevents them from breaking out. But I see that I afflict my friend in appearing offended at your first words to me: I will console her, and put you at your ease. Beautiful or not, I am so little vain of an endowment with which we are often very contemptible, that I give you leave to say whatever you please before me: I shall not have the vanity to blush at your praises."—"One must be well accustomed," said Volny, "to be beautiful, and greatly superior to that advantage, to speak of

it so carelessly. As for me, I cannot persuade myself that beauty is so small a matter: but since you take the homages



"There are transports of surprise which we cannot master," replied Volny, a little confused.

that are paid it so ill, we must adore it in silence." From that moment he talked of nothing but himself, his horses, his friends, his suppers, and his adventures. Lucy, who had her

eyes on Angelica, saw with grief that all this prejudiced Volny in her opinion.

"It is a pity," said Angelica, when he had withdrawn, "it is a great pity that they have spoiled him so early!"—"Confess, however," said Lucy, "that he is full of graces."—"And of follies, my dear friend."—"He will correct them."—"No, for the thing succeeds at his age, and we are never disposed to correct ourselves of a fault which pleases."—"But he has seen you, he will love you; and if he loves you, he will become wise."—"You do not doubt that I wish it; but I am far from hoping it."

Volny made sure that he had made a complete conquest. "My sister was right," said he, "her friend is handsome! A little singular; but her disposition is only the more piquant for it. The only thing wanting in her is birth: my mother will have me marry some young woman of quality.—Let us visit her, however; she is like nothing that we have in the great world, and she has at least sufficient charms to amuse one."

He went therefore to see his sister again, and with her he again saw Angelica. "What have I done to you," said he to Lucy, "that you have disturbed my repose? I was so easy! I amused myself so well before I saw your dangerous friend! Ah, Mademoiselle, how insipid is the world, and its amusements how cold to a heart taken up with you! Who could have told me that I should be jealous of my sister? Mixing as I do in the most brilliant company, solicited by all the pleasures, who could believe it? Yes, I wish to be in her place; she sees you continually, tells you that she loves you, and hears you say that you love her."—"You have reason to envy my happiness; but, Volny, if you pleased, yours would be still more deserving of envy." (At these words Angelica blushed.)—"O Heaven! sister! what do I hear?"—"I have said too much."—"No, my dear Lucy: in virtuous sentiments there is nothing to be concealed. Your sister, sir, wishes

that Heaven may have destined us for each other, and I cannot but be obliged to her. Nay, more: I flatter myself that I was born to make a good man happy, and there is nothing to prevent your character from being such as my husband's ought to be; you need only resemble your sister." —"If that be all, I am happy: for they flatter me that I am very like her."—"True, they flatter you; but I, who never flatter, assure you it is no such thing. My Lucy is not vain of the graces either of her understanding, or of her figure."—"Ah, but I protest that nobody in the world is less vain than I, and if I have merit, I know nothing of it."—"Nothing is more simple than Lucy's manners; she is nature itself in all her candour. See if in her behaviour, her language, her gesture, there is anything affected, anything studied."—"She is like me: for the sake of avoiding affectation I often fall into negligence; I am told of it every day."—"Lucy makes no pretensions to anything: wholly taken up with the recommendation of others, herself is the only person she forgets." —"And I, whatever talents Nature may have given me, do men see me boast of them, or presume upon them? All the world says that I excel in everything that is agreeable; I alone never mention it. Ah, if it be modesty and simplicity which you love in my sister, I am very sure that you will love me: they are my favourite virtues."—"Would they were!" said Angelica. "However, if you have any design of ever pleasing me, I advise you to examine yourself more closely."

"You have given him," said Lucy, "a lesson which he will not forget."—"No, for he has forgot it already." Angelica was right. All that he had retained of their conversation was, that she liked him, and that she would be very glad to be his wife. "With what frankness," said he, "did she make the declaration to me! How well such candour becomes beauty!" Whether it was vanity or passion, he was really moved by it; but this growing taste, if it was one, had no effect upon his ways. Intoxicated with the incense of his flatterers, agreeably

deceived by a young enchantress, he forgot that people sold him the pains which they took to please him, and his vanity, caressed by Pleasures, smiled carelessly upon them. This voluptuous softness is the most fatal languor into which a young man can be plunged. Everything, except that, is painful to him; the lightest duties are fatiguing; decorums the least austere, are dull and troublesome; he is not at his ease, but in that state of indolence and liberty where everything obeys him, nothing constrains him.

Sometimes the image of Angelica presented itself to him, like a dream. "She is charming," said he; "but what should I do with her! Nothing is more inconvenient than a delicate and faithful wife to a husband who is neither. My father would insist that I should live only for my wife. There would be love, jealousy, reproaches, tears; horrible! however, I will see her again."

Lucy came alone this time. "Well, how does she like me?"—"A great deal too well."—"I thought so."—"Too well as to appearance. That advantage makes you neglect, she says, more amiable qualities, which you would stand in need of without it."—"This Angelica of yours moralises a little, and 'tis pity. Tell her that nothing is more dull, and that so pretty a mouth as hers is not made to talk reason."—"It is not she," said Lucy, "it is you whom I would correct."—"And of what, pray? of loving pleasure, and everything that inspires it?"—"Pleasure! is there one more pure than that of possessing the heart of a virtuous and beautiful woman, of loving, and of being loved? I believe you are affectionate. Angelica has sensibility, everything that belongs to me is dear to her; but . . ."—"But she is very particular. What is it she requires?"—"Morals."—"Morals at my age! and who has told her that I have none?"—"I don't know, but she has conceived against you a prejudice that grieves me."—"Ah! I will bring her to herself again. Bring her to me, sister, bring her to me the first time I come to see you. It is to no

purpose that men are discreet," said he as he was going away; "women cannot be silent; and with whatever care I conceal my intrigues, the secret will out. But what hurt does that do me? If Angelica will have a husband who has always been a good boy, she has nothing to do but to marry a fool or a child. Am I obliged to be faithful to a wife that is to be? Oh! I will make her see the folly of her notions." She appeared, and he was himself very much humbled, very much confounded, when he heard her speak with the eloquence of virtue and reason on the shame and danger of vice. "Can you think, sir," said she to him, after having let him treat as slightly as he pleased the principles of good morals, "can you think, without blushing, on the union of a pure and chaste soul with one tarnished and profaned by the most unworthy of all inclinations? Of what value in your eyes would a heart be, debased by the vices of which you are vain? and do you think us less sensible than yourself of the charms of virtue, modesty, and innocence? You have given yourself a dispensation from those laws which you have imposed upon us; but nature and reason are more equitable than you. For me, I will never believe that a man can dare to love me while he loves things that are scandalous; and if he has had the misfortune to be unworthy of me, before knowing me, it is by the pains he may take to wipe away that blemish that I shall see whether I ought to forget it." Volny tried to make her understand that in changing condition we change our conduct, that love, virtue, beauty, had numberless rights over the soul; and that the frivolous and transient pleasures which had before occupied that indolent soul, would disappear before an object more dear, and more worthy to possess it. "Have you faith, sir," said she, "in these sudden revolutions? Do you know that they suppose a soul naturally delicate and noble? that there are very few of this temper; and that it is not a good presage of the change that you promise to await, in the very bosom of vice, the moment of becoming virtuous all on a sudden?"

Volny, surprised and confounded at this serious language, contented himself with telling her that in all this he flattered himself there was nothing personal. "Pardon me," said Angelica, "I have heard much talk of you. I am besides pretty well acquainted with the way of life of young men of fashion. You are rich, of very extensive acquaintance, and, unless by a kind of prodigy, you must be more irregular than another. But the opinion which I have of you ought not to discourage you. You think you love me: I hope you do: that perhaps will give you resolution and force to become a man worthy of esteem. You have a fine example, a father, who, without all the accomplishments which you are set off with, has acquired the highest reputation by talents useful to his country and himself. There now is what I call an uncommon man; and when you become worthy of him, I shall be proud of being worthy of you."

This discourse had thrown Volny into serious reflections; but his friends came to draw him out of them. He was expected at a delicious supper, at which Fatima, Doris, and Chloe were to assist. Their merriment was lively and brilliant; and if Volny's heart did not give itself up to it, at least his senses did.

We may easily judge that in this polite circle, a serious engagement passed for the highest extravagance. "When a person's fortune is concerned," said they, "it is time enough, we make up our minds to it; but can a young man, born to a great fortune, can such a one be fool enough, or mad enough, to forge himself a chain? If he does not love his wife, she is a burthen which he wantonly imposes upon himself; and if he loves her, what a sad method of pleasing her is that of being her husband! Is there in all the world a more ridiculous creature than a spouse-lover? Suppose also that this should succeed, what then? They are pleased for six months, to be dull all their lives. Ah! my dear Volny, no marriage: you would be a lost man. If you have a fancy

for any honest girl, wait till another marries her; they always come round to us sooner or later, and you will be happy in your turn." Would one believe that this unthinking young man thought these reflections very wise? "And yet only see," said he, "what empire virtue and beauty have over a soul, since they make it forget the care of its repose, and the value of its liberty."

He would fain not have seen Angelica again; but he was dissatisfied with himself, when he had passed a few days without seeing her. Such nevertheless is the attraction of libertinism, that on quitting this adorable girl, penetrated, ravished, enchanted with her wisdom and her charms, he plunged again into the dissipation, of which she had made him ashamed.

Is it possible, that it can be fortunate for a son to lose his mother? Volny, at the death of his, thought he saw the source of all his foolish expenses dried up; but it did not even come into his head to renounce those things which had engaged him in them, and the only care with which he was taken up, was to supply the means which he had lost to support them. Being the only son of so rich a father, he could not fail to be rich in his turn; and a young man finds at Paris a pernicious facility of anticipating his fortune. Timantes, now on his decline, would have fain reposed himself from his long fatigues, and engaged his son to take his place. "Sir," said the young man to him, "I do not think myself born for that."—"Well, my son, would you rather take the profession of arms?"—"My inclination is not that way, and my birth does not oblige me to it."—"The law, without doubt, pleases you better?"—"Oh! not at all; I have an invincible aversion for the law."—"What will you be then?"—"My mother had views of an office which confers nobility, which requires no duty, and might be discharged at Paris."—"I understand you my son; I will think of it: an excellent vocation! Oh, I see," said the good man in himself, "that

you would live an idle life; but I will hinder you if I can. An office which confers nobility, and requires no duty! very convenient. And for whom should I still wear myself out with labour and inquietude? Let me repose; let me have no other care than that which I have taken up rather too late, the care of observing the conduct of a son who promises me nothing but sorrow; for he who loves idleness, loves the vices of which idleness is the mother."

But what was the affliction of Timantes when he learnt that his son, intoxicated with pride, and plunged in libertinism, was giving himself up to all kinds of irregularities; that he had mistresses and flatterers; that he gave shows and entertainments, and that he played at a rate sufficient to ruin him? "It is my fault," said Timantes, "and I must repair it; but how? The habit is contracted: the relish for vice has made great progress. Shall I constrain this young madman? he will escape me. Shall I disavow his expenses and debts? that would be dishonouring myself, it would be extinguishing in his abased soul the very seeds of honesty. To get him shut up is still worse: thank Heaven, he is not come to such a pass as to deserve that the laws should deprive him of the natural right of freedom, and there are none but unnatural parents who would be severer towards their children than the laws. In the meantime he is hurrying to his ruin; what shall I do to draw him from the precipice on which I see him? Let us go back to the source of the evil. My riches have turned his head: born of a father without fortune, he had been like another, modest, laborious, and prudent. The remedy is easy, and my course is taken."

Timantes began from that time to settle his wealth in such a manner that he should be without connections, independent and free. Excepting his estate of Volny, and his town-house, his fortune was all in his pocket-book, and he took care to adjust matters with all his correspondents. Things being thus disposed, he returns home one day in consternation. His son

and his friends, who waited his coming to seat themselves at table, were struck with his dejection. One of them could not refrain from asking him the cause: "You shall know it," said he; "let us make a little haste, if you please, to dine: I am taken up with serious affairs." They dined in profound silence, and when they rose from table, Timantes, having taken leave of his guests, shut himself up with his son. "Volny," said he to him, "I have bad news to tell you, but you must support your misfortune with courage. My child, I am ruined. Two-thirds of my fortune are just taken on board two vessels, and the dishonesty of a person whom I trusted has deprived me of half the rest. The desire of leaving you a large fortune has undone me; happily I owe but little, and out of the remains of my fortune I shall save my estate of Volny, which is worth twenty thousand livres a year: on that we shall be able to live. It is a terrible blow, but you are young, and you may recover from it. I have not made myself unworthy of the confidence of my correspondents; my name will perhaps still retain some credit in Europe; but I am too old to begin anew; and you must repair the misfortunes of your father. I set out in greater difficulties than you will do, and with probity, labour, and my instructions, it is easy for you to go farther than I have done."

The situation of a traveller at whose feet a thunderbolt has just fallen, is not to be compared to that of Volny. "What, my father, ruined without resource!"—"You, my son, are the only resource left me, and I have no longer any hope but in you. Go, consult with yourself, and leave me to take the measures suitable to our misfortune."

The news was soon made public. The house at Paris was let; the equipages sold: a plain coach, a decent lodging, a frugal table, a family of servants suitable to the necessities of a prudent way of living—everything proclaimed this reverse of fortune, and it is unnecessary to say that the number of Timantes' friends diminished considerably.

Those of Volny were touched with his accident. "What is the matter?" said one: "they tell me your father is ruined!" —"It is too true."—"What a folly! You have your little box then no longer?"—"Alas, no."—"I am very sorry for it; I reckoned to have gone there to supper to-morrow." Another accosted him, and said, "Tell me a little how this is; your fortune is entirely ruined?"—"It is at least reduced to a very small matter."—"You have a very silly father of your own! Why the devil did he meddle? You could have been ruined yourself well enough without him."—"I am desperately sorry," said a third; "they tell me that you have sold your fine horses?"—"Alas, yes."—"If I had known it, I would have bought them. What a fellow you are! you never think of your friends."—"I was taken up with more serious affairs."— "With your little mistress, was it not? You will have her no longer on your own account; but you will always be good friends: take comfort. I know she loves you, she will behave well." Some of them said to him as they went along, "Adieu, Volny;" and all the rest shunned him.

As to his mistress whom he had enriched, she was so afflicted that she had not the courage to see him again. "Spare me," wrote she to him: "you know my sensibility: the sight of you would make too grievous an impression on me. I find myself unable to support it." It was then, his soul pierced both by the cold slights of his friends, and the unworthy desertion of his mistress, that Volny for the first time saw the veil fall which he had over his eyes. "Where have I been?" said he: "what have I done? how was I going to spend my life? Ah, what reproaches have I not merited: what wrongs have I not to repair? Let me go and see my sister," added he: for he had not the courage to say, "Let me go and see Angelica."

Lucy was overwhelmed with the news which her father had just told her. "It is not for myself," said she, "I am well enough; and to be happy far from the world, but little is

necessary; but you, my father—but Volny!"—"What would you have, daughter? I was not born to the opulence wherein I have seen myself. If my son is prudent, he will still have riches enough; if not, he will have too much." Lucy's grief redoubled on seeing her brother. "I have not the courage to console you," said she, "but I will call to my assistance our wise and affectionate Angelica."—"Oh no, sister, I have not deserved that she should interest herself in my trouble: when I might have done her honour by sacrifices, it was then that I should have rendered myself worthy of her esteem and pity: now that every one abandons me, my return, though humiliating to me, has nothing flattering in it for her."

While he was speaking thus, Angelica came of her own accord, and with the most touching air testified to him all her feeling for his loss. "It is a great misfortune for your father," added she, "it is so too for this dear girl, but it is perhaps a happiness for you. It would be cruel to afflict you by reproaches, when we owe you consolations; but you may draw from the loss of your wealth blessings more valuable than that wealth itself."—"I abused it, Heaven punishes me for it, but punishes me too cruelly in depriving me of the hope of being hers whom I love. I was young: and I dare believe that without this lesson which extinguishes my hopes, time, love, and reason would have made me less unworthy of you."

"I see you dejected," said she to him: "it is no longer from presumption, it is from despondency that we must preserve you, and what it would have been dangerous to confess to you in prosperity, you stand in need of knowing in adversity. Whether it was not possible for me to think ill of the brother of my friend, or whether it was that you yourself had inspired me with that prepossession which does not listen to reason, I thought I discerned in you, amidst all the errors and vices of your age, a disposition at bottom naturally good. Happily your past errors have nothing shameful in the eyes of the world: the path of honour and virtue is open to you, and

it is more easy for you than ever to become such as I wish. As to fortune, the reverse which you have experienced is overwhelming; I shall not make you a panegyric upon the middle state: when we have known ourselves rich, it is humiliating, it is hard to cease to be so; but the evil is not without remedy. Conform yourself to your present situation: emerge from that indolent softness in which you have been plunged: let the love of labour take place of the taste for dissipation; do all that depends on yourself, if you love me, in order to re-establish between us the equality of fortune required in marriage.—My father, who loves me, and who would not have me unhappy, will allow me, I hope, the liberty of waiting for you. If in six years your fortune is re-established, or on the point of being re-established, all the obstacles will be smoothed; if with prudence, frugality, and labour, you have the misfortune not to succeed, I require then of you, in the room of all riches, only to have consideration of your condition. I am an only daughter, very rich myself; I will cast myself at my father's feet, and obtain his permission to indemnify an estimable man for the injustice of fortune." Lucy could no longer refrain from embracing Angelica: "Ah, how justly art thou named!" said she to her. "There is nothing but a heavenly spirit that could be capable of so much virtue." Volny on his side, in the tenderness and respect with which he was seized, applied his mouth, as he threw himself down, on the bar of the grating which Angelica's hand had touched. "Mademoiselle," said he to her, "you render my misfortune dear to me, and I am going to employ my whole life to merit, if it be possible, the favours with which you overwhelm me. Permit me to come often to derive from you the courage, the prudence, and the virtue which I have need of in order to deserve you."

He retired not such as heretofore, vain, and full of himself; but humbled, confounded at having so little known the value of the most noble heart that Heaven had ever formed. He

entered his father's closet. "Your fortune is changed," said he, "but your son is still more so: and I hope that one day



"Condescend to instruct and to direct me."

you will bless Heaven for the reverse which restores me to my duty, and to myself. Condescend to instruct and to direct

me: diligent, laborious, and docile, I intend to be the support and consolation of your old age, and you may dispose of me." The good man, though transported, dissembled his joy, and contented himself with commending such good dispositions. He presented his son to his correspondents, and demanded in his behalf their friendship and confidence. We specially pity unfortunate persons whom we esteem, and each of them, touched with the misfortune of this honest man, made it a point to console him.

Volny, who resumed the name of Timantes, had but few difficulties to encounter in his first operations: his dexterity, which at first was purely his father's, but which soon after became actually his own, made his credit visibly increase. The moments of relaxation which his father obliged him to take, he passed with Angelica, and he felt a sensible pleasure in telling her his progress. Angelica, who attributed partly to herself the wonderful change in her lover, enjoyed her own influence with the double satisfaction of love and friendship. Lucy was in adoration of her, and ceased not to give her thanks for the happiness which she had procured them.

One day when her father came to see her, and testified his satisfaction at the consolation which his son gave him, "Do you know," said Lucy, "to whom we are indebted for this reformation? to the most beautiful, and most virtuous person breathing, to the only daughter of Alcimon, my companion and friend." She then related to him all that had passed. "You melt me," said the good man, "I must know this charming girl." Angelica came, and received the commendations of Timantes with a modesty which still heightened her beauty. "Sir," said she to him, "I depend on a father; but it is true, that if he has the goodness to allow me to dispose of myself, and if you are satisfied with your son, I shall take a pride in becoming your daughter. My friendship for Lucy inspired me with the first desire of it, my respect for yourself still adds to it, your very misfortunes have only made me

interest myself more in everything that could make you amends for them, and if the conduct of your son is such as you wish and I desire, whether he be rich or not, the most honourable and the most agreeable use I can make of my fortune is to share it with him." At this discourse the old man was very near letting his secret escape him: but he had the prudence to contain himself. "I did not think, madam," said he, "that it was possible to increase, in the soul of a father, the desire of seeing his son a wise and virtuous man; but you add a new interest to that of paternal love; I don't know what Heaven will do with us, but in all the situations of life, and till my last breath, be assured of my gratitude."

"That you should not have confided to me," said he on seeing his son again, "the follies of your youth, I am but little surprised, and I pardon you for it; but why conceal from me a virtuous inclination? why not confess to your father your love for Angelica, the daughter of my old friend?"—"Alas," said the young man, "have you not misfortunes enough of your own without afflicting you with my sorrows? and who has revealed my secret to you?"—"Your sister, and Angelica herself; I am charmed with her, I am in love with her, and I wish she were my daughter."—"Ah, I wish so too! but how superior is her fortune to mine!"—"In time you may come near it. Visit this lovely girl often."—"I visit only her, and I have no other ambition in the world than to be worthy of her and of you."

Timantes felt an inexpressible satisfaction at seeing daily the success of the trial to which he had put his son. He had the firmness to let him apply himself for five whole years, without relaxation, to the re-establishing of his fortune, detached from the world, and dividing his life between his counting-house and Angelica's parlour. At length seeing his reformation become habitual, and all the old seeds of vice extirpated, he went to visit Alcimon. "My old friend," said he, "you have, they tell me, a charming daughter; I come

to propose for her an agreeable partner in point of condition, and advantageous in point of fortune."—"I am obliged to you," said Alcimon, "but I tell you beforehand that I would have a person of the same condition with myself, and who would take a pride in calling me his father; I have not laboured all my life to give my daughter a husband who may be ashamed of me."—"The person I propose," said Timantes, "is precisely such a one as you like. He is rich, he is honourable, he will always respect you."—"What is he?"—"I cannot tell you but at my own house, where I invite you to come and renew, over a bottle, a friendship of forty years. Do me the favour to bring Angelica there. My daughter, who is her companion in the convent, shall have the honour of accompanying her; you shall both of you see the young man who demands her, and to put you more at your ease, he shall not know himself that I have spoken to you about him."

On the appointed day, Alcimon and Timantes went to fetch Angelica and Lucy; they arrived, they prepared to sit down at table, they sent word to the son, who, busied in his office, expected nothing less than the happiness which was preparing for him. He entered; what was his surprise! Angelica there! Angelica with her father! What was he to think, what to hope from this unforeseen rendezvous? Why had they made a secret of it to him? Everything seemed to proclaim his happiness to him, but his happiness was not probable. In this confusion of thoughts he lost the use of his senses. A sudden giddiness spread a cloud over his eyes; he tried to speak, his voice failed him, and a low bow alone expressed to the father and the daughter how much he was moved with the honour his father and he received. His sister, who came to throw herself into his arms, gave him time to recover from his confusion. Never was embrace so tender. He thought he held in his bosom Angelica with Lucy, and he could not separate himself from her.

At table, Timantes displayed an alacrity at which all the

company were surprised. Alcimon, pre-occupied as he was with the demand which he had made of him, and impatient to see the young man whom he proposed arrive, still freely gave himself up to the pleasure of finding himself again with his old friend; he had even the kindness to enter into conversation with young Timantes. "I see," said he to him, "that you are the comfort of your father. People talk of your application to business and your talents with great commendations, and such is the advantage of your condition, that a clever and honest man cannot fail of success in it."—"Ah, my friend," replied old Timantes, "it requires a great deal of time to make one's fortune, and very little to ruin it! What a pity not to have mine to offer you! Instead of proposing to you a stranger as a husband to this amiable young lady, I should have solicited that happiness for my son."—"I should have preferred him to everybody else," said Alcimon.—"Indeed?"—"Ay, indeed. But you know when one is liable to have a numerous family, there should be wherewithal to support it."—"If it depends only on that," said Timantes, "the case is not desperate, and we may come to an agreement."

Saying these words he rose from table, and returning the moment after, "There," said he, "see, there is my pocket-book: it is yet pretty well furnished;" and observing Alcimon's surprise, "Know," added he, "that my ruin is all a fiction. This young man had been spoiled by the notion that he was born rich: I knew no better method to reform him than to make him believe that I was ruined. This feint has succeeded: he is now in a good way: I am even certain that he has no desire to relapse again into the errors of his youth, and it is time to trust him. Yes, my son, I have all the wealth I had, augmented by five years' savings and the fruit of your labour. It is for him, therefore," said he to his friend, "that I demand Angelica; and if there be occasion for any new motive to engage you to grant her to me, I will confess to you that he has seen her at the convent, that he has conceived for

her the most tender love, and that this love has done more than ill-fortune itself towards attaching him to his duties." While Timantes did but sound the disposition of Angelica's father, she herself, her friend, and her lover, had felt only the emotion and anxiety of hope and fear; but at sight of the pocket-book, at the news that Timantes' ruin was but a feint, at the demand which he himself made of Angelica's hand for his son, Lucy, all wild and beside herself, flew into the arms of her father; young Timantes, still more confused, fell at Alcimon's knees; and Angelica, her countenance overspread with paleness, had not the power to lift her eyes. Alcimon raising the young man embraced him, and turning towards old Timantes, "My friend," said he to him, "when we would contrive an agreeable surprise, we must take a lesson from you. Come, you are a good father; and your son deserves to be happy."



The Sylph-Husband.

"AVOID the snares of men," we are perpetually saying to young women: "Avoid the seductions of women," we are perpetually saying to young men. Do we think we are following the plan of nature, by making one sex the enemy of the other? Are they formed only to hurt each other? Are they destined to fly one another? And what would be the fruits of these lessons if both sexes should take them literally?

When Elisa quitted the convent for the altar to espouse the Marquis de Volange, she was thoroughly persuaded that, next to a lover, the most dangerous being in nature was a husband. Brought up by one of those recluse devotees, whose melancholy imagination paints all objects in black, she saw nothing for her in the world but rocks ahead, and nothing but snares in marriage. Her soul, naturally delicate and timid, was at once blasted by fear; and age had not yet given to her senses the happy power of conquering the ascendency of opinion. Thus everything in marriage was to her humiliating

and painful. The first assiduities of her husband, far from encouraging her, alarmed her the more. "It is thus," said she, "that the men cover the chains of our slavery with flowers. Flattery crowns the victim; pride will soon sacrifice it. He consults my desires now, in order to oppose them eternally hereafter. He would penetrate into my heart, in order to unfold all its recesses; and if he discovers any foible in me, it is by that very foible that he will take care to humble me with more advantage. Let us be on our guard against the snares which are spread for us!"

It is easy to foresee the bitterness and coldness which this unhappy prejudice created on the side of Elisa, in the most intimate commerce of the pair. Volange perceived the repugnance she had for him; he would have endeavoured to conquer it, had he guessed the cause; but the persuasion that he was hated discouraged him; and in losing the hope of pleasing, it was natural enough for him to lose the endeavour.

His situation was the more painful, as it was quite opposite to his character. Volange was gaiety, gallantry, complaisance itself. He had considered his marriage as a delightful festival, rather than a serious affair. He had taken a young and handsome wife, as we choose a divinity in order to raise altars to her. "The world will adore her," said he, "I shall lead her thither in triumph. I shall have a thousand rivals; so much the better! I shall eclipse them all by my assiduities, my vows, and my homages: and the disquiet ever attached to a delicate and timid jealousy, shall preserve the lover of Elisa from the negligences of the husband."

The intolerant and disdainful coldness of his wife destroyed this illusion. The more he was in love with her, the more he was hurt by the distance which she observed towards him; and that love so tender and pure, which would have formed his happiness, seemed likely to be his torment. But an innocent artifice, of which chance gave him the first idea, re-established him in all his rights.

The sensibility of the soul must exert itself; and if it has not a real object, it creates a fantastic one. Elisa had made up her mind that there was nothing in nature worthy to attach her. But she had found in fiction something to engage, to move, to melt her. The fable of the Sylphs was in vogue. Some of those romances which represent the delicious intercourse of those spirits with mortals, had fallen into her hands; and these brilliant chimeras had in her eyes all the charms of truth.

In short, Elisa believed in Sylphs, and burnt with the desire of possessing one. We must be able at least to form to ourselves some notion of what we desire: and it is not easy to form a notion of a spirit. Elisa had been obliged to attribute all the features of a man to the sylph which she desired. But for the mansion of a celestial soul, she had composed a body to suit her fancy; a shape, elegant and noble; a countenance, animated, interesting, intelligent; a complexion of a bloom and freshness worthy of the sylph that presides over the morning star; fine, languishing, blue eyes; and something ineffably aerial in all the graces of his person. To this she had superadded a vesture the lightest imaginable, formed of flowers, ribands of the softest colours, a tissue of silk, almost transparent, in which the Zephyrs sported; two wings like those of Cupid, of whom this beautiful sylph was the image. Such was the chimera of Elisa; and her heart, seduced by her imagination, sighed after her own fiction.

It is natural for our most familiar and most lively ideas to recur in sleep: and the dreams of Elisa soon persuaded her that her chimera had some reality.

Volange, very sure that he was not beloved by his wife, had in vain observed her with the eyes of jealousy; he saw in her towards her own sex a quiet gaiety and an affable ease, sometimes even an air of friendship; but no man had yet met with such a reception from her as could alarm him. With men her countenance was severe, her air disdainful, her whole

behaviour cold; she spoke little, scarce vouchsafed attention to what was said, and when she had not an air of spleen, she had one of impatience. To be at her age neither a loving wife, nor a coquette! inconceivable! However, at last she betrayed herself.

The opera of *Zelindor*, at its first appearance, had the most brilliant success. Elisa was present at the representation in her own little box, with one of her women, for whom she had a great partiality. Justina was her confidante, and nothing attaches a timid soul so much as having once surmounted the difficulty of unbosoming itself. Elisa would fain have had this confidante of her weakness perpetually with her, and she only cared for her little box on account of the liberty it afforded them of being there together, and alone.

Volange, who from the opposite side of the theatre observed all the movements of Elisa, saw her several times start at the sight of Zelindor, and talk to Justina with an air of passion.

A strange uneasiness possessed him; but in the evening, having found Justina a moment alone, "Your mistress," said he, "seemed highly entertained at the play?"—"Ah! sir, she is distractedly fond of it: Zelindor is her passion. He seems to have been made on purpose for her. She cannot recover from the surprise into which she has been thrown by seeing her own dreams represented."—"What! does your mistress dream of such things?"—"Alas! yes, sir, and you are much to blame in reducing her to the pleasure of dreaming. Indeed, it is very lucky for you, that, young and handsome as she is, she confines herself to loving sylphs."—"Sylphs?"—"Yes, sir, sylphs. But I am betraying her secret."—"You jest, Justina?"—"It is no jesting matter. Indeed, sir, it is a shame to live with her as you do. Ah! when I see so young a lady, just awake, her complexion blooming, her eyes languishing, her mouth fresher than a rose, when she tells me, with a sigh, that she has just been happy in a dream; how I pity her! and how I hate you!"—"What do you mean? Your mistress had in

her husband such a lover as few have; but she has returned the highest tenderness of love only with a coldness almost amounting to aversion."—"You fancy so, you have mistaken timidity for coldness; and that's always the way with men. They have no pity on a young wife. Why should you grow cool? Why not make use of your rights over her?"—"That is what has restrained me. I was unwilling to owe anything to constraint, and I should have been much warmer in my instances, had she been more free in her refusals."—"Alas! how kind you gentlemen are with this delicacy of yours! You will see what thanks you get for it!"—"Hark ye, Justina, a thought has just struck me, which, if you will but assist me, may reconcile us."—"If I'll assist you!"—"Elisa is in love with sylphs; I may personate a sylph in love with her."—"And how will you make yourself invisible?"—"By visiting her only at night."—"Well, that's a good scheme enough."—"It is not very new: more than one lover has availed himself of it; but Elisa does not expect it, and I am persuaded will be deceived. The chief difficulty is the start—the first stage of the plot; but I depend on your address to furnish me with an occasion."

An opportunity was not long in presenting itself. "Ah! Justina," said Elisa, the next day on waking, "what happiness have I just enjoyed! I dreamed that I was under an arbour of roses, where the most beautiful of celestial spirits sighed at my knees."—"What! madam, do spirits sigh? and what was this beautiful spirit like?"—"It would be in vain for me to endeavour to describe what has not its copy among mankind. When the idea is effaced by my waking, I can scarce retrace it to myself."—"But I may know at least what passed at your conference?"—"I don't know what; but I was transported, I heard a ravishing voice, I breathed the sweetest perfumes, and at my waking all vanished."

Volange was informed of his wife's dream, and in her regrets he thought he saw the means of beginning to act the

sylph towards her. At that time attar of roses was scarce known in Paris: Volange put into Justina's hands a small phial of that precious elixir. "To-morrow," said he, "before your mistress wakes, take care to perfume her bed with it."

"O Heaven!" said Elisa on waking, "is it still a dream? Come here, Justina, smell, and tell me what you smell!"—"I, madam? I smell nothing."—"Nothing! do you not smell roses?"—"You grow distracted, my dear mistress, pardon me for saying so. Your dreams are all very well; but when you are wide awake! Indeed I cannot make you out."—"You are right, nothing is more inconceivable. Leave me! draw the curtains. Ah! the odour is still more perceptible."——"You alarm me."—"Listen! I told you yesterday, if I remember right, that I was sorry that the dream of the arbour was dissipated, and that I was delighted with the fragrance I had breathed there. He has heard me, my dear Justina."—"Who, madam?"—"Who! don't you know? You put me out of patience. Leave me! But *he* should know, as he is present, that it is not the flowers I regret. Ah! how much sweeter was his voice! How much more did it touch my heart! And his features, his divine features! Unavailing wishes! Alas! I shall never see him."—"Why really, madam, there is no great probability of it."—"You throw me into despair: is it affection to me, even to try to destroy the most pleasing of illusions? for that it is one, I must believe; I am not a child. And yet this fragrance of the roses! Yes, I perceive it, nothing is more real; and they are not now in season."—"What would you have me say to you, madam? All the desire I have to please you cannot make me believe a dream to be a reality."—"Very well, mademoiselle, do not believe it. Prepare my toilette, that I may dress. I am in a confusion, in an emotion at which I blush, and which I know not how to appease."

"Victory, sir," said Justina, on seeing Volange: "the sylph

is announced and desired; he is wished for; let him appear; and take my word for it he will be very well received."

Elisa was plunged all day in a reverie, which had the air of enchantment: and in the evening her husband perceived that she awaited with impatience the moment of going to rest. There was a communication between their apartments, according to custom, and Volange had agreed with her confidante on the method of getting without noise to his wife's pillow. But it was necessary, that either by a sigh, or by letting some words escape, she should herself invite him to speak.

I forgot to mention, that Elisa would have no light by her in the night; and not without reason. The pictures of the imagination are never so lively as in profound darkness. Thus Volange, without being perceived, watched for the favourable moment. He heard Elisa sigh and seek repose with disquiet. "Come then," said she, "happy sleep, thou alone makest me love life."—"'Tis mine," said Volange, in a voice so soft that Elisa scarce heard him, "'tis mine to call upon sleep: I am happy only through him: it is in his bosom that I possess you." He had not time to finish. Elisa gave a loud shriek, and Volange having disappeared, Justina ran up at Elisa's voice. "What is the matter, madam?"—"Ah! I die: I have just heard him. Recall me, if possible, to life. I am loved, I am happy. Make haste, I cannot breathe." Justina eagerly untied her ribands, gave her some reviving salts to smell, and, still keeping up her part of unbeliever, reproached her for delivering herself up to ideas which disturbed her repose, and affected her health. "Treat me as a child, as a fool!" said Elisa. "But it is no longer a dream, nothing is so true; I heard him as plainly as I hear you."—"Very well, madam, I will not put you out of patience; but endeavour to calm your spirits: remember that, in order to please a sylph, one must be handsome, and that we soon become otherwise without sleep."—"Going, Justina? How

cruel! Don't you see that I tremble all over? Stay at least till I sleep, if it be possible to sleep in my present agitation."

At last her fine eyes grew heavy, and it was resolved between Justina and Volange, that the sylph, scared by the cry which Elisa had made, should in vain be wished for the next night. Accordingly, she called upon him in vain.

She was afraid he would never more return. "My cries have frighted him," said she. "Why, madam," said Justina, "is a spirit so fearful then? And ought he not to have expected the fright which he put you into? Be easy: he knows what passes in your heart, as well as yourself. And perhaps at this moment he is listening."—"What say you? You make me start."—"How! are you not very glad that your sylph should read your soul?"—"Assuredly: nothing passes there with which he has not reason to be pleased. But there is always something of man intermingled in the idea which we form of sylphs, and modesty . . ."—"Modesty, in my opinion, is out of place with spirits. Where would be the harm, for example, in inducing him to return this evening?"—"Ah! it would be vain to dissemble; he knows very well how much I wish it."

Elisa's wish was accomplished. She had lain down, the light was put out, and Volange was at her bed-head. "Do you think he will return?" said she to Justina. "Yes, if he be gallant he must be here already."—"Ah, if he could but hear me!"—"He hears you," replied Volange in his soft voice: "but remove this witness, who gives me uneasiness." —"Justina," said Elisa, trembling, "get away."—"What now, madam? You seem moved."—"Nothing; leave me, I say." Justina obeyed, and as soon as they were alone, "What," said the sylph, "does my voice fright you? It is not usual to fear what we love."—"Alas," said she, "can I without emotion see my dreams thus realised, and passing, by an inconceivable prodigy, from illusion to reality? Am I to believe that a celestial spirit deigns to quit the heavens for me, and to be familiar with a mere mortal?"—"If you knew," replied Volange,

"how much you efface all the charms of the nymphs of the air, you would be but little flattered with your conquest. Nor is it to vanity that I would owe the reward of my passion. That passion is pure and unalterable as the essence of my being; but it is delicate also to excess. We have only the sensations of the soul: you have them as well as we, Elisa; but in order to relish their delights, you must reserve for me that soul of which I am jealous. Amuse yourself with all that the world has interesting and amiable; but love nothing in it like myself."—"Alas! it is very easy for me to obey you," said she, in a voice still faltering. "The world has no charms for me. My soul, even when unoccupied, never granted access to the vain pleasures which would have seduced it: how can it be accessible to them, now that you possess it? But you, O celestial and pure spirit, how can I hope to fix and satisfy you?"—"Learn," replied Volange, "what distinguishes us from all the spirits dispersed through the universe, and still more from the human species. A sylph has no happiness in himself: he is happy only in what he loves. Nature has forbid him the power of loving himself alone; and as he partakes of all the pleasures which he excites, he feels also all the pains which he occasions. Fate has left me the choice of this half of myself on which my happiness is to depend; but, that choice decided, we have thenceforward but one soul, and it is only in rendering you happy, that I can hope to be so."—"Be happy, then," said she to him with transport, "for the mere idea of so sweet an union, ravishes me, and lifts me above myself. What comparison is there between this intimate intercourse and that of the dangerous mortals, whose slaves we are here! Alas, you know that I have submitted to the laws of Hymen, and that fetters have been imposed on me."—"I know it," said Volange, "and one of my cares shall be to render them light."—"Ah!" resumed she, "be not jealous on that account. My husband is perhaps the man in the world who has the least tincture of the vice of his species: but they

are all so certain and so proud of their advantages, so indulgent to their own faults, and so rigorous to ours; so little scrupulous as to the means of seducing and making us slaves, that there would be as much imprudence as weakness in yielding to them."—"Will you believe it?" said her Sylph. "With all that with which you reproach men, do we reproach the Sylphides. Soft, insinuating, fertile in evasions, there is no art which they do not employ to domineer over spirits; but when they are once sure of their power, a capricious and absolute will, an imperious pride, to which everything must bow, take the place of timidity, gentleness, and complaisance; and it is not till after we have loved them, that we perceive we ought to hate them. This domineering character, given them by nature, has however its exceptions; it is the same among men. But be that as it may, my dear Elisa, both the one and the other world will be strangers to us, if you love me as I do you. Adieu: my duty and your repose oblige me to quit you. Heaven has confided to me the care of your star; I must go and guide its course. May it diffuse over you the most favourable influence!"—"Alas! going so soon!"—"Yes, in order to see you again to-morrow at the same hour."—"Adieu!—but no, one word more. May I have a confidante?"—"You have one, confine yourself to her. Justina loves you, and she is dear to me."—"What name shall I give you in speaking to her about you?"—"In heaven they call me *Valoé*, and in the Sylphide language that name signifies *all Soul*."—"Ah! I merit the same name since I have heard you speak." The Sylph then vanished. Elisa's heart swam in joy, she was at the summit of her wishes, and in the midst of the delicious ideas which possessed her, sleep seized her senses.

Justina was informed of everything that had passed, and had no need to repeat it to Volange. She only told him that he had left his wife bewitched. "That is not enough," said he: "in the Sylph's absence, I would have everything recall his passion to her. You read her soul, you know her likings;

instruct me in her wishes: the Sylph will have the air of divining them."—In the evening, Elisa, to be the more at liberty, went to walk alone with Justina, in one of those magnificent gardens which are the ornament of Paris; and though she was there wholly taken up with her Sylph, an inclination, natural to young women, made her cast her eyes on the dress of an unknown lady. "Ah, what a pretty gown!" cried she to herself; and Justina pretended not to hear her. But the adroit attendant, having heard the name of this lady who was so well dressed, remembered it, and told it to Volange.

The hour of rendezvous being come, Elisa went to bed, and as soon as she was alone, "Ah! my dear Valoé," said she, "have you forgotten me? Here am I alone, and you come not!"—"He was waiting for you," said Volange: "your image has followed him into heaven. He has seen only you in the midst of all the aerial court. But you, Elisa, in his absence, have you wished only for him?"—"No," said she to him assuredly, "nothing but you interests me."—"I know, however, Elisa, that you have formed a wish that was not for me."—"You make me uneasy," said she; "I examine myself in vain, I know not what that wish can be."—"You have forgotten it, but I remember it, and far from complaining of it, I wish that you may often have the like. I have told you that Sylphs are jealous, but it only makes them the more earnest to please. Do not be astonished to see me curious of the smallest particulars of your life: I would leave only the flowers in it, and remove the smallest thorn. For example, your husband ceases not to give me uneasiness. On what terms are you with him?"—"Why," said Elisa, a little out of countenance, "I live with him as one does with a man; in that diffidence and fear which a sex born the enemy of ours naturally inspires. They gave me to him without consulting me; I followed my duty, and not my inclination. He said he loved me, and he would have pleased me, that is, have captivated me if he could: he has not succeeded, and his vanity, which

he calls delicacy, has diverted him from his design. Thus you see we are good friends; or, if you please, both of us free."—"Is he pretty agreeable?"—"Why, yes, sufficiently so to seduce a woman who did not know so well as I, how dangerous men are."

"You might have fallen into worse hands: and this husband is not so troublesome as his sex generally are. It is well for him, moreover: and if ever you should have cause to complain of him, he shall be punished for it instantly."—"Oh no, I conjure you," said she, trembling, "whatever happens between him and me, never interfere in it. I owe you all my confidence: but it would be a cruel abuse of it, to do him any manner of hurt. He is unhappy enough in being a man, and is sufficiently punished for it."—"Your soul is celestial, charming Elisa; a mortal did not deserve you. Listen; I have not told you our manner of punishing men. They know only fire and sword: but we have gentler methods of vengeance. Whenever your husband displeases you, you shall inform me of it; and from that instant, regret, reproach shall seize his soul, and he shall have neither peace with me, nor with himself, till he has expiated at your knees the displeasure he has occasioned. I will do more—I will breathe into him all that you inspire me with. Thus the spirit of your sylph shall animate your husband, and shall be present to you without ceasing."—"That," said Elisa, transported, "is the only way of making me love him." Thus passed this fresh conversation.

The day after, Elisa being at her toilette, Justina cast her eyes on the sofa in the dressing-room, and set up a cry of astonishment. Elisa turned about, and saw displayed there a gown like that which she had seen in her walk. "Ah: see how he avenges himself of a wish not formed for him! Justina, will you believe me at last? Is he not an adorable Sylph?" Elisa's eyes could not weary themselves in admiring this new prodigy.—Volange arrived at that moment. "What a beautiful gown!" said he. "Your taste, madam, does great

honour to what you love. I think," continued he, examining



"I think," continued he, examining the stuff nearer, "this is made by the hands of fairies."

the stuff nearer, "this is made by the hands of fairies." This familiar manner of speaking came out so à-propos, that Elisa

blushed as if she had been betrayed, and her secret revealed.

At night she failed not to extol the eager gallantry of her pretty little Sylph; and he in his turn said to her a thousand things, so delicate, and so tender, on the happiness of embellishing what we love, and of enjoying the good done thereto, that she was perpetually repeating: "No, never mortal knew such language: none but a celestial being can speak and think thus."—"I must warn you, however," said he, "that your husband will soon become my rival. I take a pleasure in purifying his soul, in rendering it as gentle, as tender, as flexible to your desires as his nature permits. You will be a gainer by it without doubt, Elisa, and your happiness is wholly mine: but shall not I be a loser?"—"Ah! can you doubt," said she, "that I shall attribute to you all the care he may take to please me? Is he not like a statue which you endeavour to animate?"—"Then you will love me in him; and thinking that it is I who animate him, you will take a pleasure in rendering him happy."—"No, Valoé, that would be to deceive him: I hate falsehood. It is you I love, not him: and to testify to him what I feel for you, would be to deceive both." Volange, not to plunge deeper in so delicate a dispute, changed the subject, and asked her how she had amused herself all day. "Hey!" said she to him, "do not you know, you who read my thoughts? All the time I was disengaged I employed in tracing out a cipher, in which our two names are entwined. I draw flowers pretty well, and I never did anything with so much taste as those which form this chain."—"You have also," said he to her, "a rare talent which you neglect, and the pleasures of which are heavenly: you have a touching voice, an exquisite ear, and the harp under your fingers, mingling its accords with your notes, would form the delight of the inhabitants of the air." Elisa promised to practise, and they parted more in love, more enchanted with each other than ever.

"I am often alone," said she to her husband; "music would amuse me. The harp is in fashion, and I have an inclination to try it."—"Nothing easier," said Volange, with an air of complaisance: and that very evening she had a harp.

The Sylph returned at his hour, and appeared charmed at seeing her seize and follow his ideas with so much vivacity. "Alas!" said Elisa to him, "you are the happier of the two, you divine my wishes, and know how to anticipate them. How precious is the gift of reading the soul of the person we love! it is not allowed time to wish. Such is your advantage over me."—"Console yourself," said Valoé to her, "complaisance has its reward: I fulfil my own wishes when I forestall yours; and you, in waiting for mine, have the pleasure of telling yourself that it is my soul guides you. It is more flattering to anticipate; but it is sweeter to comply. My advantage is that of self-love; yours is that of love."

So much delicacy was to Elisa the most charming of all bonds. She would fain have never ceased listening to a voice so dear; but, out of tenderness to her, Volange took care to withdraw as soon as he had gently excited her, and sleep came to calm her spirits.

The first idea which she had at her waking was that of her Sylph, and the second that of her harp. It had been brought to her the evening before, quite plain, and without ornaments. She flew into her cabinet, and found a harp decorated with a garland of flowers, which seemed freshly gathered. Her joy was equal to her astonishment. "No," said she, "no; never has the pencil in the hand of a mortal produced this illusion." And what doubt but this was a present from her Sylph? Two brilliant wings crowned this harp, the same, beyond question, on which Valoé played in the celestial choir. While she was returning him thanks, there came in the musician, whom she had sent for to give her lessons.

Mr. Timotheus, instructed by Volange in the part which he was to perform, began an encomium on the harp. "What

fulness, what harmony in the sounds of this fine instrument! What could be softer, more majestic? The harp," to take his word for it, "would renew all the prodigies of the lyre. But the triumph of the harp," added this new Orpheus, "is when it supports with its symphonies the accents of a melodious and tender voice. Observe too, madam, that nothing discovers to more advantage the graces of a fine hand and arm; and when a lady knows how to give her head an air of enthusiasm, so that her features grow animated, and her eyes kindle at the sounds which she occasions, she becomes half as beautiful again."

Elisa cut short this encomium, by asking her master whether he was a descendant of Timotheus, Alexander's musician. "Yes, madam," said he, "we are of the same family." She took her first lesson. The music-master appeared enchanted with the seraphic tones of the harp. "'Tis divine!" cried he.—"I warrant it," said Elisa to herself.—"Come, madam, try these harmonious strings." Elisa applied to them a timid hand, and every note that she drew from the instrument thrilled to her very heart. "Wonderful, madam," cried Timotheus, "wonderful! I hope soon to hear you accompany your touching voice, and set off my music, and my verses."—"So you make verses too?" asked she, smiling. "Ah! madam," said Timotheus, "it is the strangest thing in the world, and I can scarce conceive it myself. I had heard that each man has a genius, and I took it for a fable; but upon my word nothing is more real. I had one, I who now speak to you, and I had him without knowing it. It was but yesterday evening that I had fresh confirmation of it."—"And how did you make this discovery?"—"How? last night, in my sleep, my Genius appeared to me in a dream, and dictated the following verses:—

"The empty honour I renounce
To guide thy car, Aurora!
No more, no more will I announce
Thy sweet return, oh Flora!

Me now employs a gentler, happier care ;
To guard my waking, guard my sleeping fair.
In vain Aurora weeps, in vain
Would Flora bind me in her rosy chain :
With dear Elisa will I stay,
Elisa fairer—fairer far than they."

"What!" said Elisa, with much emotion, "what, Mr. Timotheus! did you make these verses?"—"I, madam! I never made any in my life. It was my Genius that dictated them to me. He has done more: he has set them to music, and you shall hear how clever he is.—Well, madam," said he, after having sung them, "how do you like them? Is it not lucky to have a Genius like mine?"—"But, sir, don't you know at least who this Elisa is, whom you celebrate?"—"Why, madam, I believe it is a name like Phillis, Chloris, or Iris. My Genius pitched upon that, because it is agreeable to the ear."—"So, you do not pique yourself upon understanding the meaning of the verses which you sing?"—"No, madam, but that is no matter: they are melodious, and full of sensibility, and that is enough for a song."—"Let me beg you," resumed she, "to repeat them to nobody else; and if your Genius should inspire you with any more, pray reserve them also for me."

She expected her Sylph with impatience, in order to thank him for the inspiration. He denied it; but so weakly, that she was but the more convinced. He confessed, however, that it was not without reason that those men were regarded as inspired, who without reflection produced fine thoughts. "These are," said he, "the favourites of the Sylphs, and each of them has his own particular one, whom he calls his Genius. It is no wonder, therefore, that Mr. Timotheus should have one; and if he inspires him with verses which please you, he may boast of being next to me the happiest of the inhabitants of the air." The Genius of Mr. Timotheus became every day more fertile, and every day Elisa was more sensible of the praises he bestowed on her. However, Volange was

preparing her a new surprise, and the following was the object of it.

The reader will remember that she amused herself in tracing out a cipher, in which the name of Valoé was interwoven with her own. One day being invited to an entertainment, she was about to put on her diamonds: she opened her casket, and what did she see? her bracelets, her necklace, her aigrette, her earrings, mounted after the pattern of that very cipher which she had drawn. Her first sensation was that of embarrassment and surprise. "What will Volange think? What will he suspect?" While she was yet at her toilette, Volange entered, and casting his eyes on her jewels, "Ah!" said he, "nothing can be more gallant. My name and yours in the same cipher! I should be very much flattered, madam, were this a stroke of sentiment." She blushed instead of devising some evasion; but in the evening Valoé received a scolding. "You have exposed me," said she, "to a danger at which even yet I tremble: I have seen the instant wherein I must needs either deceive my husband, or give him the most humiliating opinion of me; and although the advantage which the men draw from our sincerity authorises us to use dissimulation, I perceive that, in making use of that right, I should be ill at ease with myself." Valoé failed not to commend her delicacy. "A little lie," said he, "is always a little evil, and I should be sorry to have been its occasion. But the resemblance of the name of Volange to mine had not escaped me, and I knew that your husband would go no farther than appearances. I have begun by making him discreet: that is the first good quality in a husband."

The latter part of winter had passed away in gallantries on the part of the Sylph, and on the side of Elisa in emotions of surprise and joy, which bordered on enchantment. The first, and the most beautiful of the seasons, the time in which we enjoy nature, arrived. Volange had a country-house. "We will set out whenever you please," said he to his wife,

and though he had said this in the handsomest manner, and in the sweetest tone of voice, she perceived very well, she said, that this invitation hid the imperious will of a husband. She confided her trouble to Valoé. "I don't see," said he to her, "anything painful in what he has proposed to you. Nothing attaches you to the town, and the country is at present a delicious abode, especially to a soul so feeling and benevolent as yours. We there see in nature the first example of this fortunate disposition; and the care of making mortals happy, renews itself there under a thousand forms. The forests crowned with a thick verdure, the orchards in bloom, the corn springing up, the meadows enamelled, the flocks newly recruited and bounding with joy at the first sight of the light—all concur to present us in the country images of bounty. In winter nature shows herself under a threatening and horrible aspect, in autumn she is rich and fruitful, but she groans at unburthening herself, and her liberality afflicts her; even in summer she sells her gifts, and the sad image of excessive labour joins itself to that of abundance. It is in spring that nature is gaily prodigal of her riches, and enamoured of the good she is doing."

"Alas!" said Elisa, "Nature is beautiful, I grant; but will she be so to me, in that very place where I connected my fortunes with those of a mortal, where I took an oath to be his, where everything will recall the humiliating remembrance to my mind?"—"No," replied the Sylph, "nothing, my dear Elisa, nothing in nature is humiliating, but what is contrary to her ordinances. The perfection of a plant is to flourish and bud: the perfection of a woman is to become a wife and a mother. If you had crossed the wisdom of this design, you would not have received my vows."—"What!" said Elisa, "can a pure essence, a celestial spirit, love in me that which degrades me beneath him?"—"Be what you are, dear child: I love you as a Sylph: and it is not of your senses that I am jealous. Let your soul be fair and pure, let it be devoted to

me, that is sufficient. As to what are called your charms, they are subject to mortal laws: a mortal possesses them; let him dispose of them; far from complaining, I shall rejoice at it, for one of your duties is to make him happy."—"Ah: give me time, at least, to accustom myself to this way of thinking. In the country we see one another oftener: I shall familiarise myself, perhaps, with that duty. But prithee do not abandon me!"—"I shall be there with you perpetually. I love peace and silence."

There was at this country-house a wild and solitary place, which Elisa called her wilderness, and where she used to retire to read or think at her ease. Scarce was she arrived there, when she went to it; but all was changed. Instead of her seat of moss, she found a throne of turf, interspersed with violets growing in festoons and love-knots. This throne was shaded with lilies, which formed a vaulted roof in bending; sweet-briar hedged it round and mingled the most delicious perfumes with the odour of the lilies.

Elisa's first care, at her return, was to thank her husband for the attention which he had shown in embellishing her little hermitage. "It is, I suppose," said he, "a piece of gallantry of my gardener: I am much obliged to him for having thought of it."—"Hilary," said Elisa, on seeing the gardener, "I am obliged to you for having made so pretty an arbour for me."—"Arbours, madam!" said the sly rustic. "Yes, yes, I have enough to do to think of arbours! I am hardly able to go through the labour of my kitchen-garden. If people want arbours well kept up, they must allow me more hands."—"At least you have not neglected mine, and this fine bower of lilies, with that hedge of sweet-briar, enchants me."—"Oh! the lilies, the sweet-briar, and all that, thank God, comes of itself, and without any trouble of mine."—"What, in earnest then, have not you touched it?"—"No, madam, but never mind; and if you please, after the rising of the sap, I will give it a few cuts with the pruning-knife."—"And this turf, interspersed

with violets, was it not you that cultivated it?"—"Troth, madam, not I: neither turf nor violets will do for your table, and my garden takes up enough of my time without all these fineries."

Elisa, after this discourse, no longer doubted that the metamorphosis of her wilderness into a delicious arbour, was the work of her Sylph. "Ah!" said she, in her transport, "this shall be the temple to which I will repair to adore him. I flatter myself he will be present there; but will he always be invisible?"

He came in the evening, according to custom. "Valoé," said she to him, "my arbour is charming. But, shall I tell you something? To complete its beauty, you must perform one final prodigy, and there make yourself visible to me. That alone is now wanting to my happiness."—"You demand of me, my dear Elisa, a thing that depends not on myself. The king of the air sometimes grants that favour to his favourites; but it is so rare! And even when he grants it, he prescribes the form which they shall take, and he generally prefers the most fantastic, in order to amuse himself."—"Ah!" said Elisa, "so I do but see you, I care little under what form." He promised her, therefore, to solicit that favour, with the most pressing instances.

"For the present," said he to her, "how passed your journey?"—"Why, very well. My husband conversed with a gaiety that was natural enough; and I can easily discover the effect of the trouble which you take with him. But it is in vain that the natural imperiousness of men bends a little, it still keeps its spring: one may moderate but cannot change it, at least not without long habit."—"Let us not despair of anything," said Valoé, "I have a deal of power over his soul! What do you propose doing to-morrow, my dear Elisa?"—"I shall bathe in the morning."—"I will come to see you bathe, if possible, and I will pass a moment with you."

On Elisa's waking in the morning, word was brought her

that the bath was ready.—She went there with the faithful Justina: but as the Sylph was to come to see her, and modesty is always timid, she would not have the curtains drawn back, and would scarce admit any light into the room.

Elisa entered the bath, and in a panel opposite to her, her eyes perceived some confused features. This was her own portrait painted beneath glass, which Volange had caused to be put there instead of a mirror: a striking delusion, but easily produced, by means of a groove made in the partition, through which silently slid, by turns, the looking-glass and the picture, one after another.

In this picture, Elisa was exalted on a cloud, and surrounded with aerial spirits, who presented her with garlands of flowers. At first she took what she saw for the reflection of the opposite objects; but in proportion as, with an eye more attentive, she discovered what struck her, surprise succeeded mistake. "Justina," said she, "let in some light. Either I dream, or I see . . . O heaven!" cried she, as soon as a sufficient degree of light was thrown on the picture, "my image in that glass!" —"Why, madam, I see mine there too. Where is the wonder, that one should see one's-self in a looking-glass?"—"Come here yourself then, come here, I say. Is that the effect of a looking-glass?"—"Certainly."—"Certainly! this cloud, these flowers, these genii, and I in the midst of that celestial circle, borne in triumph through the air!"—"You are not well awake yet, madam, and no doubt but you are finishing your dream in the bath."—"No, Justina, I don't dream; but I see that picture is not made for your eyes. Oh, my dear Valoé, it is you that have painted it. How ingenious is your affection!"

Elisa's eyes were fixed on the picture for a whole hour. She expected her Sylph; but he came not. "He has but just passed by," said she, "and in that homage has declared himself. But, what will my husband say? How shall I explain this prodigy to him?"—"Ah! madam," said Justina, "if this picture be not visible to my eyes, why should it be so to his?"

—"Right: but I am so confounded!" . . . Saying these words, she lifted up her eyes, and instead of the picture which she had seen, she found only the looking-glass there. "Ah! I am easy," said she: "the picture has vanished. My amiable Sylph will not give me the slightest uneasiness.—And how should I not love a spirit wholly occupied with my pleasures and my repose?"

Impatient to know the success of her request, she pretended in the evening to be fatigued with walking, and to have need of sleep. The Sylph did not keep her waiting. "I know not," said he, "my dear Elisa, whether you will be content with what I have obtained. I am permitted to appear to you." —"Ah! that is all that I desire."—"But what I foresaw has come to pass. The king of the air, who reads our thoughts, has prescribed to me the form which I am to take, and that form is . . . guess."—"I cannot tell, put me quickly out of my pain."—"Your husband's."—"My husband's!"—"I have done everything in the world to obtain a form which should please you more; but it was impossible. He threatened to withdraw his boon from me, if I was not content; and, reduced to this alternative, I liked it better than nothing."—"Very well, and when shall I see you?"—"To-morrow, in your little wilderness, at sunset."—"I shall be there, for I depend on you."—"You may without doubt."—"And yet you promised to come to see me this morning. I received the most gallant homage from you. But it was yourself that I desired."—"I was not far off; but intimidated by the presence of Justina. . . ." —"Ah! I was wrong, I ought to have sent her away. But you shall have no more reason to blame me on that account, and I shall be alone in the arbour."

This assignation did not fail to give Volange some little uneasiness. "She gives herself up to me," said he. "Shall I avail myself, to try her, of the illusion into which I have thrown her? It would be very pleasing to me to attempt her, if I was sure that she would resist! But if I were so sure of that, I

should have no need of trial. Fatal curiosity! Let me consider: let me see which is the less dangerous way. Ought I to clear it up to myself, or remain in doubt? To begin with, doubt clouds my thoughts: and can I answer for my ideas? Perhaps when it shall be too late to justify her, I shall do her the injury to believe that her seduced imagination would have triumphed over her virtue. I shall then reproach myself in vain, and the evil will be without remedy. If, on the contrary, I try her, and she resist, I am too happy. But if she yield! . . . Well, if she yield, I shall believe that the virtue of women is not able to hold out against spirits. Yes, but that spirit is clothed with a body, and though that body be mine, it is no thanks to Elisa. What a labyrinth! On entering into it I foresaw everything, except the means of getting out. Let me deliberate no longer; let me repair to the arbour; and opportunity shall determine me."

Volange, without appearing to watch Elisa, did not suffer one of her movements to escape him. He saw her dress herself with a modesty full of grace, and the decency she threw into her attire re-encouraged him a little. He remarked also, that all day she wore an air of sweetness, and a serenity which announced an innocent joy.

However, the impatient eyes of Elisa counted the steps of the sun. At last the happy moment approached, and Volange, whom she had seen set out in a hunting-dress, repaired first to the arbour in the most elegant habit. She arrived, perceived him at a distance, and the emotion it excited in her, almost made her faint away. He fled to meet her, reached out his hand to her, and seeing her trembling, seated her on her little throne of turf.

Elisa, recovering her spirits, found her Sylph at her knees. "What!" said he to her, "was it fear that the sight of me was to inspire into you? Did I not spare you the surprise of it? Did not you desire to see me? Are you sorry for it, and would you have me disappear?"—"Alas, no! punish me

not for an involuntary weakness. Joy and tenderness have a greater share than terror in the disorder you now occasion."—



Elisa, recovering her spirits, found her Sylph at her knees.

"I tremble," said Volange to himself: "she is softened; a bad beginning! Ah! my dear Elisa, why was I not free to

choose among mortals him whose figure might have pleased you most; and how ill at ease is a lover under the form of a husband!"—"That does not matter," said she, smiling. "It would have been more agreeable to me, I confess, to have seen you under the image of one of the flowers which I love, or of one of the birds, which, like you, are inhabitants of the air; but as a man, I had as lief see you under the features of my husband, as those of any other person. You seem to me even to set them off. It is indeed Volange that I see in you; but your soul gives to his eyes something, I know not what, that is celestial.—Your voice, in passing through his mouth, communicates to it a charm perfectly divine; and in his action I perceive graces which never body animated by a mere mortal possessed."—"Well then, if you love me such as you now see me, I can always be the same."—"You enchant me."—"Shall you be happy then?" added he, kissing her hand. Elisa blushed, and withdrew the hand which he had seized. "You forget," said she, "that it is a Sylph, and not a man that I love in you. Valoé is to me only a spirit, as Elisa is to you only a soul; and if you have not been able to take the figure of a mortal without changing the purity of your essence and of your love, quit that degrading form, and make me not blush any longer at the imprudence of my wishes."—"Excellent," muttered Volange, "but I now touch the critical moment."

"Elisa, it is no longer time to feign. I have done what you desired; but learn what it costs me. 'I consent to it (said the king of the genii to me)—obey the laws of a woman, become man; but flatter not thyself with having senses only in appearance. Thou wilt now love like other mortals, and feel love's pleasures and pains. If thou art unhappy, come not hither groaning and troubling the air with thy complaints. I banish thee from the heavens till the moment wherein Elisa shall have crowned thy wishes.' I hoped to prevail on you," added the Sylph, "or rather I wished to meet your wishes; I

submitted to this severe decree. Judge then, whether I love you, and whether you ought to punish me for it."

This discourse drove Elisa to despair. "O most imprudent, and most cruel of aerial spirits!" cried she. "What have you done? And to what extremity do you reduce me?" Volange quaked at seeing his wife's eyes filled with tears. "Why did you not consult me?" added she. "Was it for my shame, or for your punishment, that I desired to see you? And whatever that desire was, could you think that it could overcome what I owe to you and what I owe to myself? I love you, Valoé, I repeat it; and if there needed nothing but my life to repair the evil which I do you, you should no longer have cause to complain. But my virtue is dearer to me than my life and my love." Volange gave a start of joy. "I cannot blame you," said he, "for an excess of delicacy; but see how much I resemble Volange: it is almost he, or rather he himself, who falls at your feet, who adores you, and demands of you the reward of the most faithful and tenderest passion." —"No, it is in vain that you resemble him, you are not he, and it is to him alone that the reward which you demand is due. Arise; depart from me; and see me not again all my life. Leave me, I say. Are you mad? What is that insulting joy which I see sparkling in your eyes? Would you have the audacity then to hope?"—"Yes, I hope, my dear Elisa, that thou wilt live only for me."—"Ah! this is the height of outrage."—"Hear me."—"No, I will hear nothing."—"A single word will disarm thee."—"That word then must be an eternal farewell."—"No, death only shall separate us: behold thy husband in thy Sylph. Yes, Volange, whom you hated, is Valoé whom you love."—"O heaven! . . . But no, you are deceiving me by the resemblance."—"No, I tell thee, and Justina is witness that the whole affair is but a jest."—"Justina!"—"She is my confidante. She has helped me to mislead you: she shall assist me to undeceive you."—"You! my husband! can it be possible? I tremble still. Finish, tell

me how these prodigies were performed."—"It is love has wrought them all, and you shall know by what means."—"Ah! if it be true!"—"If it be true, my Elisa, will you believe that there is in the world a man worthy to be loved?"—"Yes, I will believe that there is one, and that it is I who possess him."

Justina, being interrogated, confessed all, and was made to swear that Valoé was none other than Volange. "It is now," said Elisa, throwing herself into the arms of her husband, "it is now that I am enchanted, and I hope that death alone will break the charm."

Notes to "THE SYLPH-HUSBAND."—P. 255.

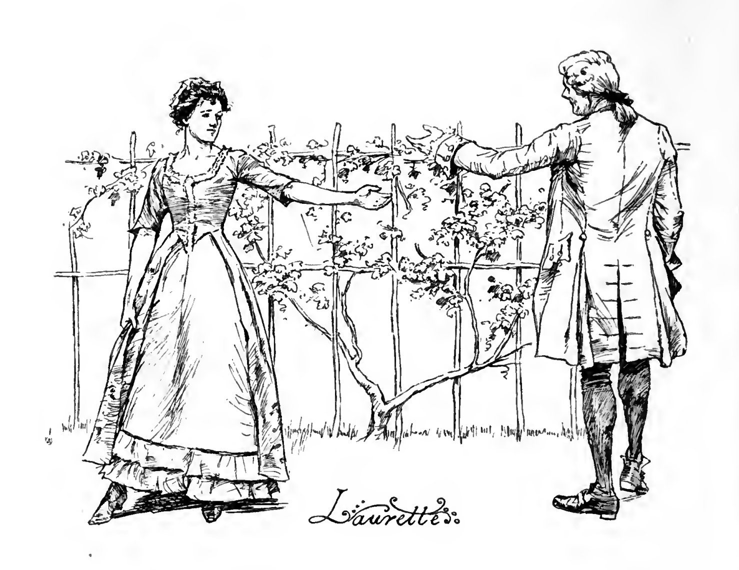
It must be remembered that the "Sylph" craze, partly owing to Pope's poem, which Marmontel himself had translated, had a considerable hold on the early eighteenth century, when the Paracelsist-Rosicrucian doctrines on the subject were popularised by the so-called *Comte de Gabalis*. The sylphs were the spirits of the air as the undines were those of the water, the gnomes of the earth, and the salamanders of the fire.

P. 268.—"*Cipher.*"

Among the various fine arts of the more frivolous and luxurious kinds which the eighteenth century brought to perfection, that of embroidering ciphers held no mean place. A famous family of artists, the Saint-Aubins, were particularly given to it: and some of their designs, of the character indicated in the text, are of extraordinary elegance and fancy.

P. 270–271.—"*Verses.*"

The translation of these verses, which is fairly faithful, though a little "expletive," has been left untampered with.



IT was the day of the village feast at Coulange. The Marquis of Clance, whose seat was at no great distance, had come with his party to see this rural spectacle, and to mingle in the dances of the villagers, as happens pretty often to those whom ennui chases from the lap of luxury, and who are brought back in despite of themselves towards pleasures that are simple and pure.

Among the young country girls who enlivened the festivity, and who were dancing under the elm, any one would have distinguished Lauretta, by the elegance of her figure, the regularity of her features, and that natural grace which is more touching than beauty. She was the cynosure of the feast. Ladies of quality, who piqued themselves on being handsome, could not help owning that they had never seen anything so ravishing. They called her up to them, and examined her, as a painter does a model. "Look up,

child," said the ladies. "What vivacity, what sweetness, what voluptuousness in her looks! If she did but know what they express! What havoc a skilful coquette would make with those eyes! And that mouth! Can anything be fresher? What a vermilion on her lips! How pure an enamel on her teeth! Her face is a little brown, and sunburnt; but it is the complexion of health.—See how the ivory neck towers from those lovely shoulders! How well she would look in a court dress! And those little budding charms which Love himself seems to have planted! The thing is really amusing. On whom will Nature lavish her gifts? Where will beauty hide itself? Lauretta, how old are you?"—"I was fifteen last month."—"You are to be married soon, of course?"—"My father says that there is no hurry."—"And you, Lauretta, have you no sweetheart lurking in your heart?"—"I don't know what a sweetheart is."—"What, is there no young man that you wish to have for a husband?"—"I never trouble my head about that: it is my father's business."—"What does your father do?"—"He cultivates his farm."—"Is he rich?"—"No; but he says he is happy, if I behave well."—"And how do you employ yourself?"—"I help my father; I work with him."—"With him! What! do you cultivate the ground?"—"Yes, but the toils of the vineyard are only an amusement to me. To hoe, to plant vine-props, to bind the vine-branch to them, to thin the leaves that the grapes may ripen, and to gather them when they are ripe, all this is not very laborious."—"Poor child! I am not surprised that those fine hands are tanned! What a pity that she should be born in a low and obscure state!"

Lauretta, who in her village had never excited anything but envy, was a little surprised at inspiring compassion. As her father had carefully concealed from her whatever might have given her uneasiness, it had never come into her head that she was an object of pity. But in casting her eyes on

the dress of the ladies, she saw very well that they were in the right. What a difference between their clothes and hers! What freshness and what beauty in the light silken stuff which flowed in long folds about them! What delicate shoes! With what grace and elegance their hair was drest! What new lustre fine linen, and ribands, and laces gave to their half-veiled charms! Indeed these ladies had not the lively air of high health; but could Lauretta imagine that the luxury which dazzled her was the cause of that languor, which rouge itself was not able to disguise? While she was ruminating on all this, the Count de Luzy came up to her, and invited her to dance with him. He was young, brisk, well made, and quite too seducing for Lauretta.

Though she had not the most delicate taste in dancing, she could not but remark in the distinction, the justness, and the lightness of the Count's movements, a grace which was not to be found in the caperings of the young villagers. She had sometimes felt her hand pressed, but never by a hand so soft. The Count while they danced followed her with his eyes. Lauretta found that his looks gave life and soul to his dancing, and whether it was that she tried from emulation to give the same grace to hers, or whether the first spark of love communicated itself from her heart to her eyes, they replied to those of the Count by the most natural expression of joy and sentiment.

The dance ended, Lauretta went and seated herself at the foot of the elm, and the Count took his place at her knees. "Let us not part any more," said he to her, "my pretty child: I will dance with nobody but you."—"That is doing me a great deal of honour," said she, "but it would make my companions uneasy; and in this village they are apt to be jealous." —"Well they may, to see you so handsome: and in town they would be the same: it is a misfortune which will follow you everywhere. Ah! Lauretta! if in Paris, in the midst of women vain of beauty which is only artificial, you were seen

to appear suddenly, with those natural charms of which you are so unconscious!"—"I, sir, at Paris! alas, what should I do there?"—"Be the delight of all eyes, and make the conquest of all hearts. Listen, Lauretta, we have not opportunity to talk together here. But, in two words, it depends only on yourself to have, instead of an obscure cottage, and a vineyard to cultivate, it depends only on yourself to have, at Paris, a little palace shining with gold and silk, a table served according to your wish, the gayest furniture, the most elegant equipage, gowns for all seasons, and of all colours; in short, everything which forms the agreeableness of an easy, quiet, and delicious life, without any other care than that of enjoying them, and of loving me as I do you. Think of it at your leisure. To-morrow there is to be a ball at the castle; all the youth of the village are invited. You will be there, my sweet Lauretta, and you shall tell me if my passion touches you, and whether you accept my offers. To-day I ask nothing but secrecy, secrecy the most inviolable. Observe it well: if it escape you, all the happiness which now awaits you will vanish like a dream."

Lauretta thought she had been actually dreaming. The brilliant lot that had been painted to her was so far from the humble state to which she was reduced, that a passage so easy, and so rapid, from one to the other, was inconceivable. Yet the handsome youth who had made her those offers, had not the air of a deceiver. He had talked to her so seriously! She had seen so much sincerity in his eyes, and in his language!

"I should easily have perceived it," said she, "if he had wanted to make a fool of me. And yet, why all this mystery which he has so strongly enjoined me? In return for making me happy, he would have me love him; nothing can be fairer: but sure he will consent that my father shall partake of his benefits; why then conceal our proceedings from my father?" If Lauretta had had any idea of seduction and vice, she would easily have comprehended wherefore Luzy demanded secrecy;

but the discretion she had learnt went no farther than to teach her to decline the rough liberties of the village youths; and in the honourable and respectful air of the Count, she saw nothing against which she was to be upon her guard.

Wholly taken up with these reflections, her head filled with the image of luxury and abundance, she returned to her humble habitation; everything there seemed changed. Lauretta, for the first time, was mortified at living under thatch. The plain furniture, which use had before made precious to her, was debased in her eyes; the household cares imposed on her began to be disagreeable; she found no longer the same taste in bread, eaten in the sweat of her brow, and on that fresh straw where she slept so well, she sighed for gilded ceilings and a rich luxurious bed.

It was much worse the next day, when she was obliged to return to labour, and to go on a burning hillside, to support the heat of the day. "At Paris," said she, "I should wake only to enjoy myself at my ease, without any other care than that of loving, and of pleasing. His honour the Count assured me of it. How amiable the Count is! Of all the girls in the village he regarded only me; he even quitted the ladies of the castle for a poor country girl. He is not proud! And yet he might very well be so! One would have thought that I did him a favour in preferring him to the young fellows of the village: he thanked me for it with such passionate eyes! such a humble and touching air! and such an amiable sweetness in his language! Though he had talked to the lady of the land, he could not have spoken more genteelly. By good luck, I was pretty well dressed; but if he were to see me to-day! What clothes! What a condition am I in!"

Her disgust at her situation only redoubled, during three days of fatigue and ennui, which she had still to endure before she should again see the Count.

The moment, which they both expected with impatience, came at length. All the youth of the village were assembled

at the neighbouring castle; and in a bower of linden-trees, the sound of instruments soon gave the signal for the dance. Lauretta advanced with her companions, no longer with that untroubled mien which she had at the village-feast, but with an air modest and timorous. This was to Luzy a new beauty, and she appeared as one of the graces, timid and decent, instead of a lively and wanton nymph. He distinguished her from the rest in his salute, but without any symptom of correspondence between them. He abstained even from approaching her, and delayed dancing with her, till another had set him the example. This other was the Chevalier de Soligny, who, ever since the village feast, had never ceased talking of Lauretta in a strain of rapture. Luzy imagined him a rival, and anxiously followed him with his eyes; but it was needless for Lauretta to perceive his jealousy, in order to remove it. As she danced with Soligny, her look was vague, her air indifferent, her behaviour cold and negligent. It came to Luzy's turn to dance with her, and he thought he saw, as he saluted her, all her graces animate themselves, all her charms spring up in her countenance. The precious colouring of modesty diffused itself there; a furtive, and almost imperceptible smile moved her rosy lips; and the favour of an affectionate look transported him with joy and love. His first emotion, had they been alone, would have been to fall at Lauretta's feet, to thank her, and to adore her; but he commanded his very eyes to restrain the fire of their looks; his hand alone, in pressing that of her whom his heart called his love, expressed his transports to her by tremblings.

"Beautiful Lauretta," said he to her, after the dance, "come a little apart from your companions. I am impatient to know what you have resolved."—"Not to take one step without my father's consent, and to follow his advice in everything. If you mean me good, I would have him partake of it; if I follow you, I would have him consent to it."—"Ah, beware of consulting him, it is he whom above all I ought to fear.

You have formalities, previous to love and union, with which my title, my condition forbid me to comply. Your father would wish to subject me to them; he would require impossibilities of me; and on my refusal, he would accuse me of having wanted to deceive you. He knows not how much I love you; but you, Lauretta, can you think me capable of doing you an injury?"—"Alas, no, I believe you to be goodness itself. You would be a great hypocrite if you were wicked!"—"Then dare trust yourself to me."—"It is not that I distrust you; but I can have no secrets from my father: I belong to him, I depend on him. If what you propose is proper, he will consent to it."—"He will never consent to it. You will have lost me, you will repent it, when too late; and you will be all your life condemned to those vile labours which I suppose you love, since you dare not quit them. Ah, Lauretta! are these delicate hands made to cultivate the ground? Must the sun destroy the colour of that beautiful complexion? You, the charm of Nature, you in whom are all the Graces, all the Loves; you, Lauretta, will you wear yourself out in an obscure and toilsome life, to be closed as the wife of some rude villager? Will you grow old perhaps in indigence, without having tasted any of those pleasures which ought perpetually to follow you? This is what you prefer to the delights of ease and affluence which I promise you. And on what do you found your resolution? On the fear of giving some moments of uneasiness to your father? Yes, your flight will afflict him: but afterwards, what will be his joy at seeing you rich by my favours, with which he also shall be loaded? What a pleasing violence will you not do him, in obliging him to quit his cottage, and give himself repose? For from that time I shall no longer have his denials to fear: my happiness, yours, and his, will be assured for ever."

Lauretta had a good deal of difficulty in withstanding the temptation, but she did withstand it: and but for the fatal accident which at last threw her back into the snare, the mere

instinct of innocence would have sufficed to preserve her from it.

In a storm which fell on the village of Coulange, the hail destroyed all the promised crops and vintage. The desolation was general. During the storm a thousand mournful cries mingled with the roaring of the winds and claps of thunder; but when the ravage was accomplished, and a light, more dreadful than the darkness which had preceded it, showed them the vine branches stripped and broken, the ears of corn hanging on their shattered stalks, the fruits of the trees bruised or fallen, nothing prevailed, throughout the desolated country, but one vast and doleful silence. The roads were covered with a crowd of unfortunate people, pale, struck with consternation, and immovable, who, contemplating their ruin with a melancholy eye, bewailed the loss of the year, and saw nothing to come but despair, destitution, and death. On the thresholds of the cottages, the disconsolate mothers pressed their tender nurslings against their bosoms, exclaiming with tears in their eyes: "Who will give suck to you if we want bread?"

At the sight of this calamity, the first thought which occurred to Luzy was the distress of Lauretta and her father. Impatient to fly to their relief, he veiled the tender interest he took in their fortunes, under the pretext of general pity for this multitude of wretches. "Let us go to the village," said he to his company; "let us carry consolation thither. It will be but little expense to each of us, to save twenty families from the despair into which this disaster has plunged them. We have partaken their joy, let us go and partake of their grief."

These words made an impression on hearts already moved by pity. The Marquis de Clancé set the example. He visited the peasants, offered them assistance, promised them relief, and restored them to hope and courage. While tears of gratitude flowed around him, his party, of both sexes, dispersed themselves through the village, entered the cottages, distributed

their gifts, and tasted the rare and heartfelt delight of seeing themselves adored by a grateful people. In the meantime Luzy ran like a madman, seeking the abode of Lauretta. It was shown him; he flew thither, and saw a countryman sitting at the door, his head inclined on his knees, and covering his face with both his hands, as if he feared to see the light again.—This was Lauretta's father. "My friend," said the Count to him, "I see you are in consternation; but do not despair; Heaven is just, and there are compassionate hearts among mankind."—"Ah, sir," replied the villager, lifting up his head, "is it for a man who, after having served his country twenty years, has retired covered with wounds, and has never since ceased to labour without relaxation, is it for him to stretch out his hand for charity? Ought not the earth, which is bedewed with my sweat, to give me subsistence? Shall I end my life by begging my bread?" A soul so lofty, and so noble, in an obscure person, astonished the Count. "You have served then?" said he. "Yes, sir, I took up arms under Berwick, I made the campaigns of Maurice. My father, before an unsuccessful lawsuit had stripped him of his estate, had sufficient to support me in the rank at which I had arrived. But at the same time that I was cashiered, he was undone. We came here to conceal ourselves; and out of the wreck of our fortune we purchased a little farm, which I cultivated with my own hands. Our former condition was unknown, and this latter, to which I seemed born, gave me no shame. I supported, and consoled my father. I married, it was my misfortune; and now I feel it."—"Your father is dead?"—"Alas, yes."—"Your wife?"—"She is happy in not having seen this dismal day."—"Have you a family?"—"I have but one daughter, and she, poor girl! . . . Do not you hear her sobs? She hides herself, and keeps at a distance from me, that she may not distract my soul." Luzy would fain have rushed into the cottage where Lauretta was mourning; but he refrained for fear of betraying himself.

"Here," said he to the father, giving him his purse: "this assistance is very small: but if you are in want, remember the Count de Luzy. I live at Paris." Saying these words he went away, without giving Lauretta's father time to return him thanks.

What was the astonishment of the good old Bazil, on finding a considerable sum in the purse! Fifty louis, more than treble the revenue of his little vineyard! "Come hither, my child," cried he; "look at him who goes yonder; it is not a man, it is an angel from heaven. But I am deceived. It is not possible that he should intend to give me so much. Go, Lauretta, run after him, and show him that he has made a mistake." Lauretta flew after Luzy, and having overtaken him, "My father," said she to him, "cannot believe that you intended this present for us. He sends me to return it to you."—"Ah, Lauretta, is not all that I have at your and your father's disposal? Can I pay him too richly for having given birth to you? Take back this poor gift: it is only an earnest of my good will; but carefully conceal from him the motive; tell him only that I am too happy in obliging a man of worth." Lauretta would have thanked him. "To-morrow," said he to her, "at break of day, as I pass the end of the village, I will receive, if you wish it, your thanks with your farewell."—"What! are you going away to-morrow?"—"Yes, I go away the most enamoured, and most unhappy of men."—"At break of day? That is about the hour when my father and I go out to work."—"Together?"—"No; he goes first; I have the care of the house upon me, and that delays me a little."—"And do you pass my road?"—"I cross it above the village; but were it necessary to go out of my way, it is certainly the least that I owe you for so many marks of friendship."—"Adieu then, Lauretta, till to-morrow. Let me see you, though but for a moment: that pleasure will be the last of my life."

Bazil, at Lauretta's return, had no more doubt of Luzy's benefactions. "Ah, what a good youth! What an excellent

heart!" cried he every instant. "However, daughter, let us not neglect what the hail has left us.—The less there is of it, the more care we must take of what is left."

Lauretta was so touched with the Count's goodness, so afflicted at being the cause of his unhappiness, that she wept all the night.—"Ah, if it were not for my father," said she, "what pleasure should I have had in going with him!" The next day she did not put on her holiday clothes; but notwithstanding the extreme simplicity of her dress, she forgot not to mingle in it a little coquetry natural to her age. "I shall see him no more: what does it signify whether I am more or less handsome in his eyes? For one moment it is not worth the trouble." On saying these words, she adjusted her bib and her tucker. She bethought her of carrying him some fruit in her breakfast-basket. "He will not despise them," said she: "I will tell him that I have gathered them." And while she ranged the fruit on a bed of vine-leaves, she bedewed them with her tears. Her father had already set out; and with the grey light of the dawn was already mingled the fairer tints of gold and purple diffused by Aurora, when the poor girl, with a distracted heart, arrived alone at the end of the village. The instant after, she saw the Count's post-coach appear, and at that sight she was troubled.

The moment that he saw her, Luzy leaped out of his carriage: and coming towards her with an air of sorrow, "I feel deeply, beautiful Lauretta," said he to her, "the favour which you do me. I have at least the consolation of seeing you sensible of my pain, and I can believe that you are sorry at having made me unhappy."—"I am wretched at it," replied Lauretta, "and would give all the wealth you have bestowed on us, never to have seen you."—"And I, Lauretta, I would give all I have never to quit you as long as I live."—"Alas, it seems to me it depended only on yourself: my father could refuse you nothing: he loves you, he reveres you."—"Fathers are cruel; they would have us marry: and I cannot marry

you. Let us think no more of it: we are going to leave each other, to bid an eternal adieu: we who never, had you been inclined to it, had ceased to live for one another, to love each other, to enjoy together all the gifts which fortune has bestowed on me, and all those which love has conferred on you. Ah! you have no conception of the pleasures which awaited us. If you had any idea of them! If you knew what you renounce!"—"Why, without knowing them I feel them. Be assured, that ever since I have seen you, everything that is not you, is nothing to me. At first my mind was dazzled with the fine things which you had promised me: but all that has vanished since: I have thought of it no longer, I have thought only of you. Ah! if my father would agree to it!"—"What occasion for his agreeing to it? Do you wait for his consent to love me? Does not our happiness depend on ourselves? Love, fidelity, Lauretta, these are your titles, and my sureties. Are there any more sacred, more inviolable? Ah! believe me, when the heart is bestowed, everything is over, and the hand has only to follow it. Give me then that hand, that I may kiss it a thousand times, that I may bedew it with my tears."—"There it is," said she, weeping. "It is mine," cried he, "this dear hand is mine, I hold it of love: to take it from me, they must take my life. Yes, Lauretta, I shall die at your feet, if we must part." Lauretta really believed that he would die on losing her. "Alas!" said she, "and shall I be the cause?"—"Yes, cruel girl, you will be the cause. You desire my death, you do."—"Oh! heaven, no: I would lay down my life for you."—"Prove it then," said he, attempting at the same time a little violence, "and follow me if you love me."—"No," said she, "I cannot—I cannot without the consent of my father."—"Very well, leave, leave me then to my despair." At these words, Lauretta, pale and trembling, her heart pierced with sorrow and fear, dared neither to hold Luzy's hand, nor let it go. Her eyes, full of tears, followed with terror the distracted looks of the Count. "Deign," said she to him, in

order to appease him, "deign to pity me, and to look at me without anger. I hoped this testimony of my gratitude would have been agreeable to you; but I dare no longer offer it you."—"What is it?" said he: "fruit, and for me! Ah, cruel one, you insult me. It is poison I need." And throwing down the basket pettishly, he drew back in a rage.

Lauretta took this emotion for hatred, and her heart, already too much softened, could not support this last attack. Scarce had she strength to get away a few paces, and sink fainting at the foot of a tree. Luzy, who followed her with his eyes, ran up and found her bathed in tears, her bosom choked with sobs, pale, and almost lifeless. He was in an agony, he thought at first only of recalling her to life: but as soon as he sees her spirits return, he availed himself of her weakness, and before she was well recovered of her swooning, she was already at a great distance from the village, in the Count's coach, and in the arms of her ravisher.—"Where am I?" said she on opening her eyes: "Ah, my Lord Count, is it you? Are you carrying me back to the village?"—"Dearest half of my soul," said he to her, pressing her against his bosom, "I saw the time had come when our adieus would cost us both our lives. Let us no more put to much trial two hearts too weak to sustain it."

"I resign myself to thee, my dear Lauretta; on thy lips I swear to live for thee alone."—"I ask no better lot," said she to him, "than to live also for you alone. But my father! Shall I leave my father? Has not he a right to dispose of me?"—"Thy father, my Lauretta, shall be loaded with riches; he shall partake the happiness of his daughter: we will both be his children. Depend on my tenderness to ease and console him. Come, let me catch those tears, let me drop my own into thy bosom: they are the tears of joy, the tears of rapture." The dangerous Luzy mingled with his language all the charms of seduction, and Lauretta was not insensible: while her father, uneasy, afflicted, seeking his daughter, calling

on her with loud cries, asked after her through the whole



Throwing down the basket pettishly, he drew back in a rage.

village. When he still did not see her at night and had to go to bed in his sorrow, in despair at having lost her, her image

presented itself to his mind, wholly occupied it, and troubled it without ceasing. It was necessary to beguile his grief.

Luzy drove at full speed, the blinds of his carriage were let down, his people were sure and faithful, and Lauretta left behind her no trace of her flight. It was even essential to Luzy to conceal his having carried her off. But he despatched one of his domestics, who, from a village quite out of the road, contrived to transmit to the *curé* of Coulange this billet, in which Luzy had disguised his handwriting. "Tell Lauretta's father to be easy; that she is well, and that the lady, who has taken her with her, will have the same care of her as of her own child. In a short time he shall know what is become of her."

This note, which was far from affording consolation to the father, sufficed to palliate the crime of elopement to the daughter. Love had penetrated her soul; he laid open the avenues of it to pleasure; and from that time the clouds of grief dispersed, the tears dried up, sorrow was appeased, and a transient, but profound oblivion of everything but her lover, suffered her to taste, without remorse, the criminal happiness of being his.

The kind of delirium, into which she fell on arriving in Paris, completed the distraction of her soul. Her house was a fairy-palace; everything in it had the air of enchantment. The bath, the toilette, the supper, the delicious repose which love left her, were so many varied forms which sensual pleasure assumed, to seduce her through the medium of her senses. When she waked, she thought herself still deceived by a dream. When she rose, she saw herself surrounded with women, attentive to serve her, and emulous in pleasing her. She, who had only studied to obey, had only to desire in order to be obeyed. "You are queen here," said her lover, "and I am your principal slave."

Imagine, if possible, the surprise and transport of a young and simple country girl, at seeing her fine black hair, so

negligently tied till that time, with its wavy ringlets that nature alone had formed, now rounding into curls beneath the ply of art, and rising in a diadem, bespangled with flowers and diamonds; at seeing displayed before her the most fashionable ornaments, seeming to solicit her choice; at seeing, I say, her beauty issue, radiant as from a cloud, and spring up again in the glittering panels which environed her, in order to multiply her charms. Nature had lavished on her all its graces; but some of these gifts had need of cultivation, and skilful hands disputed in crowds the care of instructing her, and the glory of embellishing her. Luzy, intoxicated with joy and love, possessed and adored his conquest.

In the meantime, the good Bazil was the most unhappy of fathers. Proud, full of honour, and—above all—jealous of his daughter's reputation, he had sought her, waited for her in vain, without publishing his uneasiness: and nobody in the village was made acquainted with his misfortune. The *curé* himself assured him of it by communicating to him the note which he had received. Bazil gave no credit to this note; but, dissembling with the pastor, "My daughter is discreet," said he to him, "but she is young, simple, and credulous. Some lady has had a mind to take her into her service, and has prevailed on her to anticipate my refusal. Let us not turn the imprudence of youth into a scandalous report, and let us leave people to believe that my daughter quitted me with my own consent. The secret rests with you; spare the daughter and the father." The *curé*, a prudent and worthy man, promised and kept silence. But Bazil, devoured by chagrin, passed the days and nights in tears. "What has become of her?" said he; "is it a lady that she has followed? Is there any so mad as to rob a father of his daughter, and make herself guilty of abduction? No, no, it is some ravisher who has seduced and ruined her. Ah, if I can discover him, either his blood or mine shall wash out my injury." He went himself to the village whence they had brought the note. By

the *curé's* information he contrived to discover the person who had been charged with the message; he examined him; but the answers only confused him the more. The very situation of the place served but to mislead him. It was six leagues out of the road which Luzy had taken, and lay quite across the country. But had Bazil even put together the two circumstances of the departure of the Count and his daughter's elopement, he would never have suspected so virtuous a young man. As he confided his grief to nobody, nobody could give him any light. He groaned therefore within himself, in expectation of some chance light to clear up his suspicions. "Oh, heaven," said he, "it was in your wrath that you gave her to me! And I, mad as I was, congratulated myself on seeing her grow up and improve! What formed my pride, now constitutes my shame. Oh, that she had died as soon as she was born!"

Lauretta endeavoured to persuade herself that her father was easy, and the regret of having left him, touched her but faintly.—Love, vanity, the taste for pleasures (a taste ever so lively at its birth), the care of cultivating her talents, with a thousand continually varied amusements, divided her life, and filled her soul. Luzy, who loved her to idolatry, and who feared lest he should lose her, produced her as little as possible in public: but he indulged her with all the means which mystery has invented, of being invisible amidst the great world. This was enough for Lauretta: happy in pleasing him whom she loved, she felt not that restless desire, that want of being seen and admired, which by itself brings out so many handsome women to our spectacles and gardens. Though Luzy, by the choice of a small circle of amiable men, made his suppers amusing, she was absorbed there by him alone; and she was able to convince him of it without disobliging anybody else. The art of reconciling partialities with good manners, is the secret of delicate souls; coquetry makes a study of it; love knows it untaught.

Six months passed away in this union, in this sweet intelligence of two hearts filled and ravished with each other, without weariness, without disquiet, without any other jealousy than that which makes us fear that we do not please so much as we love, and which renders us desirous of combining everything that can captivate a heart.

In this interval Lauretta's father had twice received news of his daughter, with presents from the lady who had taken her into friendship. It was to the *curé* that Luzy directed them. The packets, despatched to the next post to the village by a faithful servant, came to hand unsigned; Bazil could not have told to whom to send them back; and then his refusals would have created doubts of what he wished to be believed, and he trembled lest the *curé* should have the same suspicions with himself. "Alas!" said the good father to himself, "my daughter is, perhaps, still virtuous. Appearances are against her; but they are only appearances: and though my suspicions should be just, I must lament, but I ought not to dishonour my child."

Heaven owed some consolation to the virtue of this worthy father; and it was Heaven, without doubt, which brought about the accident I am going to relate.

The little traffic in wine which Bazil carried on, obliged him to come to Paris. As he was traversing that immense city, he was stopped in the street by some carriages crossing each other. The voice of a frightened lady engaged his attention. He saw . . . he dared not believe his eyes . . . Lauretta, his daughter, in a gilt glass-coach, superbly dressed, and with diamonds in her hair. Her father would not have known her, if, as she perceived him herself, surprise and confusion had not made her shrink back and cover her face. At the movement which she made to hide herself, and still more at the cry which escaped her, he could not doubt but it was she. While the carriages which were locked together were disengaging, Bazil slipped between the wall and his daughter's

chariot, got up to the step of the coach-door, and in a severe tone said to Lauretta, "Where do you live?" Lauretta, seized with fear and trembling, told him her habitation. "And what name do you go by?"—"*Coulange*," replied she, looking down, "from the place of my birth."—"Of your birth! Ah, unhappy girl! . . . This evening, at dusk, be at home, and alone." With these words he got down, and pursued his way.

The torpor of amazement which Lauretta had received was not yet dispelled, when she found herself at home.

Luzy was supping in the country, and so she found herself left to herself at the moment when she had most need of counsel and support. She was about to appear before her father, whom she had betrayed, forsaken, and overwhelmed with grief and shame: her crime presented itself to her in the most odious form. She began to feel the vileness of her condition. The intoxication of love, the charms of pleasure had banished the thought; but as soon as the veil had fallen, she saw herself such as she was in the eyes of the world, and in those of her father. Terrified at the examination and sentence which she was about to undergo, "Wretch!" cried she, melting into tears, "whither can I fly? Where can I hide me? My father, the soul of honour, discovers me a castaway, abandoned to vice, with a man who has no right to me! O my father! O terrible judge! How shall I appear before you?" It occurred to her more than once to avoid him and disappear; but vice had not yet effaced from her soul the holy laws of nature. "Shall I draw him to despair," said she; "and after having merited his reproaches shall I draw his curse upon me? No, though unworthy the name of his daughter, I revere that sacred name. Though he came to kill me with his own hand, I must await him, and to fall at his feet. But no, a father is always a father. Mine will be touched with my tears. My age, my weakness, the Count's love, his favours all plead for me; and when Luzy has spoken, I shall no longer be so culpable."

She would have been distressed if her people had been witnesses of the humiliating scene which was preparing. By good luck she had given out that she supped with a friend, and her women had taken a holiday for the evening. It was easy to her to get rid of the two footmen who had attended her, and when her father arrived, she let him in herself.

"Are you alone?"—"Yes, father."—He entered with emotion, and after having looked her in the face, in a sorrowful and melancholy silence: "What do you here?" said he. Lauretta answered by throwing herself at his feet, and bathing them with her tears. "I see," said her father, casting his eyes around him, "in this apartment where everything bespeaks riches and luxury, I see that vice is at its ease in this town.—May I know who has taken the trouble to enrich you in so short a time, and from whom came this furniture, these clothes, that fine equipage in which I saw you?"—Lauretta still replied only by tears and sighs. "Speak to me," said he, "you shall weep afterwards; you will have time enough."

At the recital of her story, in which she disguised nothing, Bazil passed from astonishment to indignation. "Luzy!" said he, "that honourable man! . . . These then are the virtues of the great! The base wretch! In giving me his gold, did he think he paid me for my daughter? These proud rich folks think, that the honour of the poor is a thing of no value, and that want sets itself to sale. He flattered himself with consoling me! He promised you to do it! Unnatural man! how little does he know the soul of a father! No, ever since I lost thee, I have not had one moment without sorrow, not one quarter of an hour of peaceful sleep. By day, the ground which I cultivated was watered with my tears: in the night, while you forgot yourself, while you were losing yourself in guilty pleasures, your father, stretched on his straw, tore his hair, and called on thee with loud cries. Ah! Have my

groans never re-echoed in your soul? Has the image of a distressed father never presented itself to your thought, never troubled your repose?"—"Oh! Heaven is my witness," said she, "that if ever I had thought I had caused you so much sorrow, I would have quitted everything to fly to your arms. I revere you, I love you—I love you more than ever. Alas! what a father have I afflicted! At this very instant, when I expected to find in you an inexorable judge, I hear from your own mouth only reproaches full of gentleness. Ah, my father! when I fell at your feet I felt only shame and fear; but now it is with affection that you see me penetrated, and to the tears of repentance are joined those of love!"—"Ah! I revive, I recover my daughter," cried Bazil, raising her up. "Your daughter, alas!" said Lauretta, "she is no longer worthy of you."—"No, do not discourage yourself. Honour, Lauretta, is without doubt a great happiness; innocence a greater still; and if I had the choice, I would rather have seen thee deprived of life. But when innocence and honour are lost, there still remains one inestimable good; virtue which never perishes, which is never irrecoverably lost. We have only to choose, it springs up again in the soul; and when we think it extinguished, a single touch of remorse gives birth to it anew.—This will console you, daughter, for the loss of your innocence, and if your repentance be sincere, Heaven and your father are appeased. For the rest, nobody in the village knows your adventure; you may appear there again without shame."—"Where, my father?"—"At Coulange, whither I am about to carry you." (These words embarrassed Lauretta.) "Hasten," continued Bazil, "to strip off these ornaments of vice. Plain linen, a simple bodice, a white petticoat, these are the raiment of your condition. Leave his envenomed gifts to the wretch who has seduced you, and follow me without more delay."

One must have possessed at such a moment the timid and affectionate soul of Lauretta, must have loved, like her,

a father and a lover, to conceive, to feel the combat which arose in her weak heart, between love and nature. The trouble and agitation of her spirits kept her immovable and mute. "Let us go," said her father, "moments are precious." —"Pardon me," cried Lauretta, falling again on her knees before him, "pardon me, my father; be not offended if I am slow to obey you. You have read the bottom of my soul. Luzy wants the name of husband; but he has over me all the rights which the tenderest love can give him. I am content to fly him, to tear myself from him, to follow you: I am resolved to do so though it be my death. But to steal away in his absence, to leave him to believe that I have betrayed him!"—"What say you, unhappy girl? what signifies to you the opinion of a vile deceiver? what are the rights of a passion which has ruined and dishonoured you? You love him! you love your shame then. You prefer his vile favours to the innocence of which he has robbed you? You prefer your cruellest enemy to your father? You dare not fly him in his absence, and quit him without his consent! Ah! when you were to quit your father, to overwhelm him, to drive him to destruction, you were not then so timorous. And what do you expect from your ravisher? That he should defend you? That he should withdraw you from paternal authority? Oh! let him come; let him dare to drive me hence; I am alone, unarmed, enfeebled by age; but they shall see me stretched on the threshold of your door, calling for vengeance to God and man. Your lover himself, in order to get at you, shall step over my body, and passers-by shall say with horror, 'There is the father whom she disavows, and whom her lover tramples under his feet.'"

"Ah! my father," said Lauretta, terrified at this image, "how little do you know the man against whom you rail so cruelly! None is gentler, none has a more feeling heart. To him you will be venerable and sacred—" "Dare you talk to me of the veneration of one who dishonours me? Do you hope that he may seduce me with his perfidious gentleness?

I will not see him: if you can answer for him, I cannot answer for myself."—"Then, do not see him, but permit me to see him, if for a moment."—"What do you ask me? to leave you alone with him! Ah! though he should take away my life, I would not show him that complaisance. While he was able to keep you from me it was his crime, it was yours. I was not answerable for it But Heaven now puts you again under my guard, and from this moment I answer to Heaven for you. Let us go, daughter, it is already dark; this is the instant for us to depart! make up your mind: renounce your father, or obey."—"You pierce my heart."—"Obey, I tell you, or dread my curse." At these terrible words, the trembling Lauretta had no strength to reply. She undressed herself before her father's eyes, and put on, not without a flood of tears, the plain dress which he had prescribed to her. "My father," said she to him at the moment when she was preparing to follow him, "dare I ask, as the price of my obedience, one single favour? You do not wish the death of him whom I sacrifice to you. Suffer me to write him two words, to inform him it is you that I obey, and that you oblige me to follow you."—"What! that he may come to carry you off again, to steal you from me? No, I will leave no trace of you. Let him die of shame, he will do justice upon himself: but of love! never fear: libertines never die of that." Then taking his daughter by the hand, he departed without noise: and next morning, embarking on the Seine, they returned into their own country.

At midnight the Count arrived at his house, where he flattered himself pleasure awaited, and love invited him, and found all there in alarm and confusion.

Lauretta's people told him with fright that they did not know what was become of her; that they had sought her in vain; that she had taken care to send them out of the way, and had seized that moment to elude their vigilance; that she did not sup at her friend's; and that on going off she had

left everything behind her, even to her diamonds, and to the gown she had worn that day.

"We must wait for her," said Luzy after a long silence. "Do not go to bed: there is something incomprehensible in this affair."

Love, which seeks to flatter itself, began with conjectures which might excuse Lauretta; but finding them all destitute of probability, he gave himself up to the most cruel suspicions. "An involuntary accident might have detained her; but in the absence of her people to undress herself, to make her escape alone, at dusk, to leave her house in uneasiness! all this," said he, "clearly shows a premeditated flight. Has Heaven touched her? Is it remorse that has determined her to fly me? Ah! why can I not at least believe this? but if she had taken an honourable resolution, she would have had pity on me; she would have written to me, though it were but two words, of consolation and adieu. Her letter would not have betrayed her, and would have spared me suspicions, grievous to me, and dishonourable to her. Lauretta, O Heaven! candour, innocence, truth itself! Lauretta unfaithful and perfidious! she who but this very morning . . . No, no, it is incredible . . . and yet it is but too true." Every moment, every reflection seemed a new proof: but hope and confidence could not quit his heart. He struggled against persuasion, as an expiring man against death. "If she were to return," said he, "if she were to return innocent and faithful! Ah, would my fortune, my life, all my love be sufficient to repair the injustice I am doing her! What pleasure should I have in confessing myself in fault! With what transports, with what tears, would I efface the crime of having accused her! Alas! I dare not flatter myself with being unjust; I am not so happy."

There is nobody who, in the uneasiness and ardour of expectation, has not sometimes experienced at Paris the torment of listening to the noise of coaches, each of which we take for

that which we expect, and each of which by turns arrives and carries away, as it passes, the hope which it has just excited. The unhappy Luzy remained till three in the morning in this cruel perplexity. Every carriage which he heard was, perhaps, that which was bringing back Lauretta; till at last hope, so often deceived, gave place to despair.

"I am betrayed," said he, "I can no longer doubt it. It is a plot which has been concealed from me. The perfidious creature's caresses served only the better to disguise it: and the very day on which I was to sup in the country has been artfully chosen. She has left everything behind her, to let me understand that she has no further occasion for my presents. Another, no doubt, loads her with them. She would have been ashamed to have kept anything of mine:—the most feeble pledge of my love would have been a perpetual reproach to her treachery and ingratitude. She would forget me, in order to deliver herself up in peace to the man she prefers.—Ah, the perjured wretch! does she hope to find any one who will love her like me? I loved her too well, I gave myself too much up to her. Her desires, by being perpetually anticipated, became extinct. These are the ways of women. They grow tired of everything, even of being happy. Ah! canst thou be so now, perfidious girl? Canst thou be so, and think of me? Of me! do I say? What signify to her my love and grief? Ah, while I can scarce restrain my cries, while I bathe her bed with my tears, another, perhaps . . . Horrible thought! I cannot support it; I will know this rival, and if the fire which burns in my breast has not consumed me before day, I will not die without vengeance. It is doubtless some one of those false friends whom I imprudently introduced to her. Soligny, perhaps . . . he was taken with her, when we saw her in her own village. . . . She was simple and sincere then. How is she changed! He wanted to see her again, and I, poor easy fool! thinking myself beloved, believing it impossible for Lauretta to be unfaithful, brought

my rival to her. I may be deceived, but anyhow it is he whom I suspect. I will be satisfied instantly.—Follow me," said he to one of his domestics; and it was scarce daylight, when, knocking at the Chevalier's door, Luzy asked to see him.

"He is not at home, sir," said the Swiss. "Not at home?"—"No, sir, he is in the country."—"How long since?"—"Since yesterday evening."—"At what hour?"—"About dusk."—"And to what part of the country is he gone?"—"We do not know: he has taken only his valet-de-chambre with him."—"In what carriage?"—"In his vis-à-vis."—"Is his absence to be long?"—"He will not be back this fortnight, and has ordered me to take care of his letters."—"At his return tell him that I was here, and that I desire to see him."

"At last," said he, as he went away, "I am convinced. Everything tallies. Nothing remains but to discover where they have concealed themselves. I will tear her from his arms, the perfidious wretch! and I will have the pleasure of washing away with his blood my injury and her treachery!"

His researches were ineffectual. The Chevalier's journey was a mystery which he could not penetrate. Luzy was therefore fifteen days on the rack; and the full persuasion that Soligny was the ravisher, diverted him from every other idea.

In his impatience, he sent every morning to know if his rival was returned. At last he was told, that he was just arrived. He flew to him, inflamed with anger; and the favourable reception given him by the Chevalier only irritated him more. "My dear Count," said Soligny, "you have been very earnest in your inquiries for me; how can I serve you?"—"By ridding me," replied Luzy, at the same time turning pale, "either of a life which I detest, or of a rival whom I abhor. You have carried off my mistress; nothing remains but to pluck out my heart."—"My friend," said the Chevalier to him, "I have as great a desire to get my throat cut as

yourself, for I am quite mad with vexation; but if you please it shall not be with you. Let us understand each other. Lauretta has been carried off, you say; I am very sorry for it; she was a charming girl; but upon honour it was not by me. Not that I pique myself on any delicacy in that point. In love I forgive my own friends, and allow myself, these little petty-larcenies; and though I heartily love you, yet, if Lauretta had thought proper to deceive you for me, rather than for another, I should not have been cruel. But as for elopements I am not your man. That is too serious a business for me; and if you have no other reason for killing me, I advise you to let me live, and to have some breakfast." Though the Chevalier's language had very much the air of frankness, Luzy still retained his suspicions. "You disappeared," said he, "the same evening, at the same hour: you lay hid for a fortnight; I know besides that you loved her, and that you had an inclination for her at the very time that I took her."

"You are in luck," said Soligny, "that in the humour I am now in, I love you enough to come to an explanation. Lauretta went off the same evening as I did; I have nothing to say to that: it is one of those coincidences of fate which form the plot of romances. I thought Lauretta beautiful as an angel, and I had an inclination for her, it is true; but if you are going to cut the throats of all who are guilty of the same crime, mercy upon one half of Paris! The important article then is the secret of my journey, and absence? Very well, I will explain that matter.

"I was in love with Madam de Blanson, or rather I was in love with her riches, her birth, her credit at court; for the woman has everything in her favour, except herself. You know, that if she is neither young nor handsome, she has, to make amends, a deal of sensibility, and is easily set on fire. I had got into her good graces, and saw no impossibility in being, as it is called, happy, without proceeding to marriage. But marriage was my point; and under cover of the

respectful timidity, inseparable from a delicate love, I eluded all opportunities of making an ill use of her weakness. So much reserve disconcerted her. She never saw, she said, a man so timorous and so much of the novice. I was as bashful as a young girl: my modesty absolutely put her out of patience. I will not trouble you with all the arts I employed for three months to sustain attacks without surrendering: never did coquette strive so much to kindle ineffectual desires. My conduct was a masterpiece of prudence and dexterity: but the widow was too hard for me. I am her dupe: yes, my friend, she has surprised my credulous innocence. Seeing that she must attack me in form, she talked of marriage. Nothing was more advantageous than her proposals: her fortune was to be entirely in my power. There remained only one bar to our happiness. I was very young, and she was not sufficiently acquainted with my character. In order to try one another, she proposed to me to pass some days together, *tête-à-tête*, in the country. 'A fortnight's solitude and liberty,' said she, 'will give us a truer idea of each other, than two years at Paris.' I fell into the snare, and she managed so well that I forgot my resolution. How frail is man, and how little certain of himself! Having taken up the part of husband, I was obliged to maintain it, and I gave her the best opinion of me that I possibly could; but in a short time she thought she perceived that my love abated. It was in vain that I protested it was the same: she told me that she was not to be deceived with empty words. and that she plainly saw a change in me. At last, this morning when I woke, I received my discharge in form from under her own hands. It runs in these words. 'The slight trial which I have made of your sentiments is sufficient. Begone, sir, whenever you please. I would have a husband whose attentions should never relax: who will love me always, and always in the same way.' Are you satisfied? There is my adventure. —You see it is of a quite different nature from that which you

attribute to me. I have been carried off, as well as your Lauretta; Heaven grant, that they have not done by her as they did by me! But, now you are undeceived with respect to me, have you no other suspicions?"

"I am lost in them," said Luzy: "forgive my sorrow, my despair, and my love, the step which I have just taken."—"Pshaw!" replied Soligny: "nothing was more just. If I had taken away your mistress, I must have given you satisfaction. There is nothing in it; so much the better: and now we are good friends. Will you breakfast with me?"—"I would die."—"That would be going rather too far. Preserve that remedy for more serious disasters. Lauretta is a pretty girl, though a bit of a baggage; try to get her back again; but if you cannot get her, take another, and the sooner the better."

While Luzy remained inconsolable, and was scattering his money with a liberal hand, in order to discover some traces of Lauretta, she was at her father's lamenting her error, or rather her lover.

Bazil had given out in the village, that he had not been able to live without his daughter, and that he had been to fetch her home. They found her much improved. Her charms were now full-blown; and that which is called the air of Paris had given her new ones, even in the eyes of the villagers. The ardour of the youths who had sought her was renewed, and became still more lively. But her father refused them all. "You shall never marry in my lifetime," said he. "I will cheat no one. Work and lament with me. I have just sent back to your unworthy lover all his presents. We owe him nothing now, except our shame."

Lauretta, humble and submissive, obeyed her father without complaining, and without daring to raise her eyes towards him. It was incredibly difficult to her to resume the habitude of indigence and labour. Her feet, grown tender, were wounded; her delicate hands were made sore; but these

were slight evils. "The pains of the body are nothing," said she, groaning; "those of the soul are much more grievous."

Though Luzy was perpetually present to her, and her heart was not able to detach itself from him, she had no longer either a hope or a desire of returning to him. She knew what bitterness her going astray had diffused over the life of her unhappy father; and though she had been at liberty to quit him again, she would not have consented to it. But the image of the grief, in which she had left her lover, pursued her, and was her torment. The right he had to accuse her of perfidy and ingratitude, was a fresh cause of anguish.—"If I could but write to him! But I have neither the liberty, nor the means. Not content with obliging me to abandon him, they would have me forget him. I shall sooner forget myself; and it is as impossible for me to hate him as to forget him. If he was culpable, his love was the cause, and it is not mine to punish him for that. In all that he did he meant only my happiness and my father's. He deceived himself, he led me astray: but at his age one thinks only of love. Yes, I owe it to him, I owe it to myself, to clear up my conduct; and in that point alone my father shall not be obeyed." The difficulty now was only to procure the means of writing; but her father, without intending it, had spared her the trouble.

One evening Luzy, retiring to rest more afflicted than ever, received an anonymous packet. The hand in which the direction was written was unknown to him; but the post-mark told him enough. He opened it with precipitation; he discovered the purse which he had given Bazil, with the fifty louis which he had left in it, and two like sums which he had sent to him. "I see the whole affair," said he: "I have been discovered. Her father sends me back my presents in indignation.——Haughty and severe, as I perceived him to be, as soon as he knew where his daughter

was, he came to fetch her, and forced her to follow him." That moment he assembled such of his domestics as had attended Lauretta. He examined them, he asked if any one among them had not seen with her a countryman, whom he described to them. One of them actually remembered that, the very day that she went away, a man exactly like the person he described got up on the boot of Lauretta's coach, and spoke to her for a moment. "Quick," cried Luzy, "put post-horses to my chaise!"

The second night, having arrived at some leagues from Coulange, he caused the servant who attended him to disguise himself like a peasant, sent him to get information, and in the meanwhile endeavoured to take rest. Alas, there is none for the soul of a lover in so hard a case! He counted the minutes from the departure of his emissary to his return.

"Sir," said the servant, "good news! Lauretta is at Coulange, at her father's."—"Ah, I breathe again."—"They even talk of marrying her."—"Of marrying her!—I must see her."—"You will find her in the vineyard: she works there all day."—"Just heaven! what hardship! Come, I will lie concealed; and you, under that disguise, shall watch the moment when she is alone. Let us not lose an instant: away!"

Luzy's emissary had told him truth. A suitor, rich in his own way, had offered himself as a match for Lauretta: and the *curé* had sent to Bazil to persuade him to accept it.

In the meantime, Lauretta toiled in the vineyard, and thought of the unhappy Luzy. Luzy arrived and perceived her at a distance: he advanced with precaution, saw her alone, ran up, threw himself towards her, and stretched out his arms. At the noise which he made across the vine-leaves, she raised her head, and turned her eyes; "My God!" cried she. . . . Surprise and joy took from her the use of her voice. She was in his arms all trembling, without having been able to mention his name. "Ah, Luzy," said she, at last, "is it

you? This is what I asked of Heaven. I am innocent in your eyes: that is enough; I will endure the rest. Adieu, Luzy, adieu for ever! Begone; and lament your Lauretta. She reproaches you with nothing. You will be dear to her, to her last breath."—"I," cried he, locking her in his arms, as if they were about to tear her from him again, "I quit you! Thou half of myself, *I* live without thee, far from thee! No, there is no power on earth that shall separate us."—"There is one which is sacred to me: the will of my father. Ah, my beloved! If you had known the profound grief into which my flight plunged him, feeling and good as you are, you would have restored me to his tears. To take me away from him a second time, or to plunge a dagger into his bosom, would be to me the same thing. You know me too well to require it of me; you are too humane to wish it yourself. Cast away a hope which I have lost. Adieu. Heaven grant that I may expiate my fault! But I can scarce reproach myself for it. Adieu, I say, my father is coming: it would be dreadful for him to find us together."—"It is what I would have," said Luzy: "I wait for him."—"Ah, you are now about to redouble my sorrows."

At that instant Bazil arrived; and Luzy, advancing some paces to meet him, threw himself at his knees. "Who are you? What do you want?" said Bazil, astonished at first. But as soon as he had fixed his eyes on him, "Wretch!" cried he, drawing back, "begone, take yourself away from my sight."—"No, I shall die at your feet, if you will not vouchsafe to hear me."—"After having ruined, dishonoured the daughter, dare you present yourself to the father!"—"I am to blame, I confess, and here are the means to punish me," said he, presenting his sword. "But if you will hear me, I hope that you will have compassion on me."—"Ah," said Bazil, looking at the sword, "if I were as base, as cruel as you! . . . See," said he to his daughter, "how grovelling is vice, and how great the shame of it, since it obliges a man to

crouch at the feet of his fellow-creature, and to bear his contempt."—"If I were merely vicious," replied Luzy haughtily, "far from imploring you, I should brave you. Attribute my humiliation only to that which is the most honourable and noblest cause in nature, to love itself, to the desire which I have of expiating a fault, excusable perhaps, and with which I reproach myself so cruelly, only because I have a good heart." Then, with all the eloquence of emotion, he endeavoured to justify himself, attributing the whole to the warmth of youth, and the intoxication of passion.

"It is very lucky for the world," replied Bazil, "that your passion has not been that of money! You would have been a Cartouche." (Luzy chafed at this discourse.) "Yes, a Cartouche. And why not? Will you have the meanness to think that innocence and honour are of less value than riches and life? Have you not availed yourself of the weakness, the infirmity of this unhappy girl, in order to rob her of these two treasures? And me, her father, do you think you have done me a less injury, than if you had murdered me? A Cartouche is broken on the wheel, because he steals riches, with which we may dispense; but for you, who have taken from us what a well-educated girl, what a virtuous father cannot lose without dying, what have you deserved? They call you noble, and you believe yourself to be so. These are the marks of that nobility of which you are so vain. At a time of distress, when the most wicked of mankind would have had pity on me, you accost me, you pretend to pity me, and you say in your heart, 'There now is a wretch who has no other consolation in the world but his daughter: she is the only blessing Heaven has left him; and to-morrow I will carry her away from him.' Yes, barbarian! yes, villain! this is what passed in your soul. And I, poor credulous fool, I admired you, loaded you with blessings, and prayed Heaven to accomplish all your wishes; while all your wishes were to seduce my daughter! What do I say, wretch that I am! I delivered her

up to you, I bade her run after you, to restore indeed to you that gold, that poison, with which you thought to corrupt me. It seemed as if Heaven had warned me that it was a destructive and treacherous gift; I resisted the impulse, and forced myself to believe you compassionate and generous; you were only perfidious and unpitying; and the hand which I would have kissed, which I would have watered with my tears, was preparing to pluck out my heart. See," continued he, baring his bosom, and showing his scars, "see whom you have dishonoured! I have shed, for my country, more blood than you have in all your veins: and you, useless being, what are your exploits? Agonising a father, and debauching his daughter! poisoning my days and hers. See there the unhappy victim of your seduction, see her there steeping her daily bread in her tears. Brought up in the simplicity of an innocent and laborious life, she loved it; she now detests it: you have made labour and poverty insupportable to her: she has lost her joy with her innocence, and she can no longer lift up her eyes without blushing. But that which distracts me, that which I will never forgive you, is, that you have shut the heart of my daughter against me; you have extinguished the sentiments of nature in her soul: you have made the company of her father a torment to her; perhaps, alas! . . . I dare not speak it . . . perhaps I am her aversion."

"Ah, my father!" cried Lauretta, who till then had remained in dejection and confusion. "Ah, my father! this is punishing me too much. I merit everything except the reproach of having ceased to love you." On saying these words, she fell at his feet, and kissed the dust of them. Luzy prostrated himself before him, and in an excess of emotion, "My father," said he, "pardon her, pardon me, embrace your children; and if the ravisher of Lauretta be not too unworthy of the name of her husband, I conjure you to grant me that title."

This reaction would have softened a harder heart than

Bazil's. "If there were," said he to Luzy, "any other way of restoring to me my honour, and to both of you your innocence, I would refuse this. But it is the only one; I accept



"My father," said he, "pardon her, pardon me, embrace your children."

it, and much more for your sakes than for my own; for I neither expect, nor will have anything from you, and will die cultivating my vineyard."

The love of Luzy and Lauretta was consecrated at the foot of the altar. Many people said that he had disgraced himself, and he admitted it. "But the disgrace is not," said he, "that which they attribute to me. The shame was in doing the wrông, and not in repairing it."

There was no way of inducing Bazil to quit his humble habitation. After having tried every art to draw him to Paris, Madam de Luzy persuaded her husband to purchase an estate near Coulange, and the good father consented at last to go there and spend his old age.

Two hearts formed for virtue were ravished in having recovered it. That image of celestial pleasures, the concord of innocence and love, left them nothing more to desire, but to see the fruits of so sweet an union. Heaven heard the prayer of nature; and Bazil, before he died, embraced his grandchildren.

Note to "LAURETTA"

P. 292.—Maurice, *i.e.* Maurice de Saxe.

A Wife of Ten Thousand.



"ENJOY, madam, all the comforts of your house; do the honours, and be the delight of it; but never trouble your head about any of its affairs." This, for some eight years, was the language of the pompous Melidor to his wife. The advice was agreeable to follow; and accordingly Acelia, who was young and lively, had followed it pretty well. But reason came with age; and the species of intoxication, in which she had been plunged, vanished.

Melidor had had the misfortune of being born in opulence. Brought up among the young nobility of the kingdom, invested on entering into the world with a considerable office, master of his wealth from years of discretion, these latter were to him years of folly. His prevailing foible was to wish to live like a man of quality. He made himself familiar with the great, he carefully studied their manners; and as the noble and simple graces of a true courtier are not easy to imitate, it was to the airs of our little lords that he attached himself, as to good models.

He would have thought it a disgrace not to have been able to say, *My domains and my vassals:* so he laid out the better part of his ready money in the purchase of lands, the revenue of which was small indeed, but the rights whereof were magnificent.

He had heard say that the great lords had stewards who robbed them, creditors whom they did not pay, and mistresses who were not very faithful; he considered it, therefore, as beneath him to look into his accounts, to pay his debts, or to be delicate in love.

His eldest son had scarce attained his seventh year; he took particular care to choose him a tutor who was a conceited coxcomb, and who had no other merit than that of bowing gracefully.

This tutor was the dependent of a flatterer of Melidor's, called Duranson, naturally an insolent, low fellow, a kind of mastiff, who barked at all passers-by, and caressed only his master. The part he played was that of a misanthrope, full of arrogance and moroseness. Rich, but covetous, he found it convenient to have a good house which was not his own, and pleasures of every sort of which another bore the expense. A silent observer of all that passed, he was to be seen sunk in his arm-chair, deciding on everything with a few cutting words, and setting himself up as a household critic. Woe to the worthy man who was not formidable! He pulled him to pieces without mercy, if his air had displeased him ever so little.

Melidor took the moroseness of Duranson for philosophy. He was conscious of being his hero; and the incense of a man of this character was to him a delicate perfume. The rough flatterer took care not to compromise or expose himself. If he applauded Melidor in public, it was only with a complaisant glance or smile: he kept his panegyric for a *tête-à-tête;* but then he gave him a full meal of it. Melidor could scarce believe himself endowed with such eminent

merit; but there must be something in it, for his friend Duranson, who assured him of it, was the farthest in the world from being a nauseous flatterer.

It was not enough to please the husband; Duranson had also flattered himself that he might charm the young wife. He began by speaking well to her of herself alone, and very ill of all others of her age and condition. But she was as little touched with his satires as with his encomiums. He suspected that he was despised; he endeavoured to make himself dreaded, and by some sharp and spiteful strokes he made her perceive that it was at any time in his power to be severe even on herself. This succeeded no better. "I may have foibles," said she to him, "and I allow them to be attacked, but at a little more distance, if you please. In my own house a perpetual censor would be almost as tiresome to me as a servile flatterer."

By the resolute tone which she assumed, Duranson saw plainly that, in order to reduce her, he must go a little farther about. "Let me endeavour," said he, "to make her stand in need of me: let me afflict her in order to console her; and when her wounded vanity shall throw her off her guard, I will seize one of those moments of disgust. The confidant of a woman's sorrows is often the happy avenger of them."

"I pity you, madam," said he, "and I must no longer conceal from you what afflicts me sensibly. For some time past Melidor has been going wrong; he is guilty of follies; and if he goes on in this manner, he will no longer have occasion for such a friend as myself."

Whether it was levity, or dissimulation with a man whom she did not esteem, Acelia received this information without deigning to appear moved. He dwelt upon it, made a merit of his own zeal, and declaimed against the caprices and irregularities of the husbands of the age; said that he had put Melidor to the blush; and in opposing the charms of Acelia

to the worthless allurements which had caught her husband, he grew so very warm, that he forgot his part, and soon betrayed himself. She smiled with disdain at the knave's want of address. "This is what I call a friend," said she: "not those base adulators, whom vice keeps in pay in order to flatter and serve it. I am very sure, for instance, that you have told Melidor to his face all that you have just now said to me."—"Yes, madam, and a great deal more."—"No doubt, then, you will be brave enough to reproach him with his misdoings before me; to overwhelm him with them."—"Before you, madam! Ah, beware of making a scene: that would be to alienate him irrecoverably. He is proud; he would be hurt at having cause to blush before you. He would consider me only as a perfidious friend. And who knows to what hidden motive he would impute our correspondence?"—"No matter, I will convict him, and confront him in you with a witness whom he cannot refuse."—"No, madam, no, you will be undone. It is by dissembling wrongs that a woman governs: discretion, gentleness, and your own charms, these are your advantages over us. Complaint and reproach only serve to exasperate us; and of all the methods of correcting, the worst is to put us to confusion." He was in the right, but to no purpose. Acelia would hear nothing. "I know," said she, "all I risk; but though it were to come to a rupture, I would not act, by my silence, the accomplice of my husband." He strove in vain to dissuade her; he was reduced to ask her pardon, and to entreat her not to punish him for a zeal which, perhaps, was imprudent. "And this then," said Acelia, "is that courageous freedom of yours which nothing can intimidate? I shall be more discreet than you: but remember, Duranson, never hereafter to say anything of your friends that you would not have them hear again. As for me, whatever wrong my husband does me, I forbid you ever to speak to me about it."

Duranson, enraged at so scurvy a reception, vowed the

destruction of Acelia; but it was necessary first to involve her in the ruin of her husband.

Nobody at Paris has so many friends as an opulent and prodigal man. Melidor's friends, at his suppers, never failed to commend him to his face, and they were polite enough to wait till they had risen from table, before they ridiculed him. His creditors, who daily increased, were not so complaisant; but friend Duranson kept off the throng. He knew, he said, the way to play off such knaves. However, as they were not all equally timid, it was needful, from time to time, to have recourse to expedients in order to appease the most turbulent, and Duranson, under a fictitious name, coming to the succour of his friend, lent him money on pledges at the most usurious interest.

The more Melidor's affairs became disordered, the less he wished to hear of them. "Manage it," said he to his steward; "I will sign, but leave me at peace." At last the steward came to tell him that his capital was exhausted, and his effects were going to be seized. Melidor fell on his agent, and told him he was a rogue. "Call me what you please," replied the steward coolly; "but you are in debt, and must pay, in default of which they will sue you."

Melidor ordered the faithful Duranson to be called, and asked him if he had no resource.—"You have one very sure one: let your wife be your security."—"Ah! but will she consent to it?"—"To be sure! can she hesitate, when your honour is at stake? However, do not alarm her; treat the matter as a trifle, and let her see in this undertaking nothing more than a common form, which she cannot avoid fulfilling." Melidor embraced his friend, and repaired to his wife.

Acelia, wholly devoted to her amusements, knew nothing of what passed: but luckily Heaven had endowed her with a just way of thinking, and a firm soul. "I am just come, madam," said her husband, "from seeing your new carriage: it will be exquisite: your new horses have come: ah, my dear, what a

beautiful team! the Count de Pisa is training them. They are full of spirit; but he will break them; he is the best whip in all Paris."

Though Acelia was accustomed to the gallantries of her husband, she could not help being surprised and pleased with this last. "I am ruining you!" said she.—"Prithee, my dear, what better use can I make of my fortune than to employ it in what pleases you? Give a loose to your desires, and enjoy them at your ease. I have nothing which is not at your service; and I flatter myself that you think so. A propos," added he carelessly, "I have some arrangements to make, and the common forms of business will require your signature. But we will talk of that this evening. At present I can think of nothing but the colour of your carriage; the varnisher only waits for your directions."—"I will consider of it," said she; and as soon as he was gone, she fell into reflections on what had passed between them.

Acelia was a rich heiress, and her fortune was legally secured to her. She perceived the consequences of the arrangement proposed to her; and in the evening, instead of going to the play, she went to her attorney. What was her surprise, on learning that Melidor was reduced to the most ruinous expedients! She employed the time of the play in getting intelligence and advice.

At her return she concealed her uneasiness before the company at supper; but when her husband, *tête-à-tête* with her, proposed to her to be his security, "I will not abandon you," said she, "if you will deign to trust yourself to me; but I require an entire confidence, and full power of ruling my house."

Melidor was humbled at the thought of having his wife for a guardian: he told her that she had no reason to be alarmed, and that he would not suffer her to take disagreeable details upon herself.—"No, sir, I have neglected it too long; it is a fault of which I will no longer be guilty." He gave up

the point, and the creditors being assembled the next day, "Gentlemen," said he to them, "your visits are troublesome to me; my wife would be glad to talk with you; see and settle with her."—"Gentlemen," said Acelia to them in a prudent, but assured tone, "though my estate be my children's, I am sensible that I ought to assist their father with it; but I must have a clear understanding. Those who are honest shall find me punctual; but I will not satisfy knaves for the follies of a spendthrift. Bring me to-morrow copies of your instruments. I require only time to examine them; I will not keep you waiting."

From the moment that Acelia saw herself at the head of her house, she was a different woman. She cast her eyes on her past life, and saw nothing in it but the flutter of a thousand idle occupations. "Are these," said she, "the duties of a mother of a family? Is it then at the price of her honour and of her peace, that she must pay for handsome suppers, rich equipages, and brilliant trifles?"

"Sir," said she to her husband, "to-morrow I shall have a schedule of your debts; I must have that of your revenues: order your steward to come to me." The steward came and gave in his accounts. Nothing was more clear; far from having money in hand, it was found that he had advanced it, and there was due to him above double the amount of his arrears of salary. "I see," said Acelia, "that the steward understands his accounts better than we do. We have nothing to do but to pay him, with thanks that we are not more in his debt."—"To pay him!" said Melidor, in a low voice; "and with what?"—"Out of my pocket. The first step in economy is to turn off the steward."

A reform was instantly made in the household, and in the expenses; Acelia setting the example. "Courage, sir," said she, "let us cut to the quick: we sacrifice only our vanity."—"But decency, madam?"—"Decency, sir, consists in not dissipating the substance of another, and in the innocent

enjoyment of one's own."—"But, madam, when you discharge your people you pay them; and that is exhausting our only resource."—"Be easy, my dear: I have trinkets and diamonds, and by sacrificing these ornaments, I make myself one which is well worth them all."

Next day the creditors arrived, and Acelia gave them audience. Those of whom Melidor had purchased furniture of value, or superfluous knick-knacks, consented to take them back again, at a fair allowance. The rest, enchanted with the reception and good intentions of Acelia, unanimously agreed to take her as arbitrator; and her conciliatory graces united all minds.

One alone, with a somewhat confused air, said that he could not abate anything. He had valuable effects in pledge; and on the list of moneys borrowed, he was set down for an enormous usury. Acelia detained him by himself, in order to bend him if possible. "Madam!" said he, pressed by her reproaches, "I come not here on my own account; and M. Duranson had better have excused me from playing this ugly part."—"Duranson, say you! What! it is he who under your name . . ."—"He himself."—"So our securities are in his hands."—"Yes, and a writing from me, in which I declare there is nothing due to me."—"And may I have a duplicate of that writing?"—"Certainly, and presently if you will, for the name of usurer sits heavy on me." This was a weapon in Acelia's hands; but it was not yet time to enlighten Melidor, and drive Duranson to extremities. She thought it necessary to dissemble some time longer.

Her lawyer, who came to see her, found that in twenty-four hours she had set aside a good part of her revenue, and discharged a multitude of debts. "You proceed," said he, "upon good principles. Economy is of all resources the most sure, and the easiest. It at once makes one richer by all the wealth that used to be wasted."

While they were discoursing, Melidor, aghast, was in agony

at seeing his house stripped. "Nay, sir," said his wife, "console yourself: I retrench nothing but your follies." But he would see nothing but the world, and the humiliation of abdicating. He retired in consternation, leaving Acelia with her lawyer.

A young woman has a prodigious advantage in business: besides inspiring hope and the desire of pleasing, she interests, and disposes to a kind of easiness which men do not show to one another. Nature contrives a secret intelligence between the two sexes. Every obstacle is removed, every difficulty vanishes; and instead of treating one another as enemies, like man to man, with a woman we deliver ourselves up as friends. Acelia had thus a proof; and her lawyer exerted a zeal and affection in serving her, which he would not have had for her husband.

"Madam," said he to her, "on striking the balance of Melidor's estate with his debts, I find enough to acquit them. But estates sold in a hurry commonly go at a low price. Let us suppose that his are free; they will more than answer the two hundred thousand crowns which he owes; and if you will engage yourself for him, it is not impossible to reduce this multitude of ruinous and trying debts to a small number of more simple and less burthensome articles."—"Do it, sir," said Acelia, "I consent; I engage myself for my husband; but let it be without his knowledge." The lawyer acted with prudence; and Acelia was authorised to contract in Melidor's name.

Melidor had acted openly with her in every article but one, which he had not dared to declare to his wife. In the night Acelia, hearing him groan, endeavoured tenderly to comfort him. "You do not know all," said he; and these words were followed by a profound silence. Acelia pressed him in vain; shame stopped his mouth.—"What!" said she, "have you sorrows which you dare not confide to me? have you a friend more tender, more sure, more indulgent?"—"The greater right you have to my esteem," replied Melidor, "the

more I ought to blush at the confession which I have yet to make to you. You have heard of the courtesan Eleonora. . . . What am I to say to you? She has promissory notes from me for upwards of fifty thousand crowns." Acelia saw with joy the moment to regain the heart of her husband.—"This is not a time for reproaching you," said she, "with a folly of which you are ashamed, and to which my own dissipation has perhaps contributed. Let us repair and forget our wrongs; this last is not without remedy." Melidor had no conception that a woman, till then so full of levity, could all of a sudden have acquired so much thoughtfulness. Acelia was not less surprised that a man, so haughty and vain, should suddenly become so modest. "May it not be happy for us," said they to each other, "that we have fallen into misfortune?"

The next day Acelia, having thought the matter well over, went in person to Eleonora's. "You do not know," said she to her, "who is come to see you? It is a rival." And without any further preparation she told her name.—"Madam," said Eleonora, "I am confounded at the honour you do me. I am sensible I have done you wrong; but my condition must be my excuse. Melidor is to blame, and on seeing you I blame him myself: he is more unjust than I imagined."—"Mademoiselle," said Acelia, "I complain neither of you nor of him. It is a punishment due to a thoughtless woman to have a libertine husband; and I have at least the pleasure of seeing that Melidor has still some delicacy in his taste. You have understanding, an air of decency, and graces worthy to embellish virtue."—"You view me, madam, with too much indulgence; which convinces me of the truth of what I have been often told, that the most virtuous women are not those who are most severe on us. As they have nothing to envy us, they have the goodness to pity us. Those who resemble us are much more rigid! they tear us to pieces, while they imitate us."—"I will tell you," replied Acelia, meaning to bring her to her purpose, "what we blame most in persons of your

way of life; it is not that weakness of which so many women have cause to blush, but a still more odious passion.—The fire of youth, the relish of pleasures, the attraction of a voluptuous and unconfined life, sometimes even passion itself, for I can believe you susceptible of it, all this may have its excuse: but in renouncing feminine virtues, you are all the more obliged to have those of a man: and there is a kind of honour which you do not renounce."—"Undoubtedly."—"Very well; tell me, then, does this honour permit you to make an ill use of the intoxication and folly of a lover, to such a degree as to require, and to accept from him mad engagements, that are ruinous to his family? Melidor, for example, has given you notes for fifty thousand crowns; and do you perceive the consequence of them, and how much room there is to be severe against such a seduction?"—"Madam," replied Eleonora, "it was a voluntary gift; and M. Duranson can witness for me that I have refused a much larger?"—"You know M. Duranson?"—"Yes, madam; it was he that put Melidor into my hands; and I was willing on that account to acquit him of all his own promises."—"Excellent: he turned his own liabilities over to his friend's account."—"He told me so, and I imagined that Melidor had approved of it. As to the rest, Melidor was his own master; I have nothing of his but what he has given me, and it seems to me nothing can be more fairly earned."—"You think so; but would you think so, if you were the child that is beggared for it? Put yourself in the place of a mother of a family, whose husband ruins her in this manner; who is on the point of seeing him dishonoured, pursued, driven from his house, deprived of his estate, obliged to conceal himself from the eyes of the world, and to leave his wife and children a prey to shame and grief; put yourself for one moment in the place of that miserable and distressed woman, and judge yourself, in that condition. What steps would not you take, mademoiselle? You would without doubt have recourse to the laws which superintend our morals. Your complaints, and

your tears, would put in their claim against an odious surprise, and the voice of nature and of equity would rise up in your favour. Yes, mademoiselle, the laws against poison are severe; and the gift of pleasing is a poison, when it is abused. It attacks not life; but it attacks reason and honour; and if, in the intoxication which it occasions, insane sacrifices are required and obtained of a man, what you call free gifts are in reality robberies. This is what any other would say, what you would say perhaps in my place yourself. But I am more moderate. There is somewhat due to you; I am come to pay you: but nobly, and not madly. Melidor has been your lover for six months, and if he gives you a thousand louis you will confess that he is doing handsomely." Eleonora, softened and confounded, had not the courage to refuse. She took Melidor's notes, and went with Acelia to her lawyer.

"Would not you like," said Acelia to her, on arriving there, "an annuity of a hundred louis, rather than this sum, which will soon be dissipated? The way to detach one's self from vice, child, is to set one's self above want: and I am of opinion that you will one day be glad to have it in your power to be virtuous."

Eleonora kissed Acelia's hand, and let fall some tears. "Ah, madam," said she, "how amiable and touching is virtue under your features. If I have the happiness to return to it, my heart will owe that return to you."

The lawyer, charmed with Acelia, informed her that the two hundred thousand crowns were ready in his hands, and that they waited her orders. She departed transported with joy, and on seeing Melidor again, "There are your *billets-doux*," said she; "it was very hard to part with them. Write no more of so fascinating a kind!" His friend Duranson was present; and by the gloomy air of Melidor, she plainly saw that he had made him ashamed of having resigned himself to his wife. "You receive them very coldly," said she to her husband, "considering they come from so dear a hand."—

"Would you have me, madam, rejoice at being the talk of all Paris? Nothing is talked of but my ruin; and you make it so very public, that my friends themselves are not able to



Eleonora kissed Acelia's hand, and let fall some tears.

deny it."—"Your friends then, sir, had some way of remedying it without scandal? They have probably come to offer you their credit, and their good offices? M. Duranson, for instance . . ."

—"I, madam! I can do nothing; but I think that it would have been easy to find resources without such a disgraceful publicity."— "Yes, resources which leave one without any? My husband has made too much use of them: you know it better than anybody. As for the disgrace which you affix to the publication of our misfortune, I know how great your delicacy is, and I esteem it as I ought."—"Madam! I am a man of honour, and it is well known."—"It ought to be known, for you tell all the world of it; but as Melidor will have no more love-intrigues to form, your honour grows useless." Melidor, at these words, took fire himself, and told his wife that it was an affront to him to insult his friend. She was about to answer, but without deigning to hear her, he retired in a rage, and Duranson followed him.

Acelia was not the least shaken by this; and leaving them to conspire together, devoted herself entirely to the care of her family. Her son's tutor, since their failure, thought his office beneath him, and plainly showed his mind. He was discharged that very evening, and in his place came a good abbé, simple, modest, and sufficiently learned, whom she entreated to be their friend, and to infuse his own morals into his pupil.

Melidor, whom Duranson had taught to consider the ascendant which his wife had assumed as the utmost mortification, was incensed at hearing that the tutor was discharged. "Yes, sir," said she to him, "I give my son the example and direction of a sensible man instead of a coxcomb; I mean also to rid you of an insolent parasite, who makes you pay for his pleasures. These are the injuries I do you, I confess them, and you may make them public."—"It is odious," replied Melidor, without listening to her, "it is odious to avail yourself of the condition to which I am reduced, to lay down the law to me. No, madam, my misfortune is not such as to degrade me into being your slave. It was your duty to enter into the engagement which I proposed to you: you have declined it; you are no longer dear to me, and your trouble is

useless. If I have allowed my affairs to be in disorder, it was for you: the only remedy for my misfortune is to remove the cause, and to-morrow we separate."—"No, sir, this is not the proper juncture. In a little time you will peaceably enjoy a reputable fortune; you will be free, and easy, and happy. Then, when I have re-established your honour, and your peace, I will see whether I ought to give place to the workers of your ruin, and to leave you, by way of punishment, at the brink of the abyss, whence I am now going to rescue you. Till then we are inseparable, and my duty and your misfortune are to me inviolable ties. For the rest, you shall judge to-morrow what manner of man he is whom you prefer to me. I will give you proofs of his perfidy, before his face, and I renounce all claim to your esteem, if he dares disavow them."

Melidor, shaken by the generous firmness of Acelia, was distracted all night between vexation and gratitude. But in the morning he received a letter, which threw him into despair. It contained the information that nothing was talked of at court but his luxury, his extravagance, and the misfortune which was the fruit of it; that everybody blamed him loudly; and that nothing less was proposed than to oblige him to give up his post. "Read," said he, when he saw Acelia, "read, madam, and tremble at the condition to which you have reduced me."—"Oh, my friend," said he to Duranson, who arrived just at that instant, "I am undone: you foretold it to me. The bustle she has made dishonours me. They are taking away my place, and my livelihood." Duranson pretended to be overcome with the news. "Be not afraid," said Acelia to him; "your security is good. You will lose nothing by it, but the monstrous usury which you would extort from your friend. Yes, Melidor, he is our usurer, our lender upon pledges."—"I, madam!"—"Yes, sir, you yourself, and I have the proof in my hands. There it is," said she to her husband; "but this is not all; this worthy friend made you pay Eleonora for the favours which he had received from her; he

had the presumption to try to seduce your wife, by informing her of your amours; and he ruined you under a borrowed



"One word more," said Acelia to him.

name."—"Ah, this is too much," said Duranson, and he rose to depart. "One word more," said Acelia to him. "You shall be

unmasked in an hour, known by city and court, and branded everywhere with infamy, if you do not this very instant take to my lawyer's, where I am going to wait for you, both Melidor's securities and his notes-of-hand." Duranson turned pale, was confused, and disappeared, leaving Melidor confounded, and motionless with indignation and astonishment.

"Courage, my dear," said Acelia to her husband. "I will answer for laying the storm. Adieu. This evening it shall have blown over."

She repaired to the attorney's, gave her bond, received the two hundred thousand crowns, discharged the debts, and tore up the bills, beginning with those of Duranson, who had prudently done as he was ordered. From thence she took a post-chaise, and went immediately to court.

The minister did not dissemble his displeasure, nor the resolution which had been taken to oblige Melidor to sell his place. "I do not attempt to excuse him," said she: "luxury is a folly in our situation, I confess; but it has been my folly rather than my husband's. His complaisance has been his only fault; and ah, sir, what will not men do for a wife whom they love! I was young; he thought me handsome; my husband consulted my desires rather than his own means; he knew no fear, nor misfortune, but that of displeasing me. This was his imprudence; it is now repaired: he owes nothing more than my portion, and I have given it up to him."—"What, madam!" cried the minister, "have you become bound for him?"—"Why, who ought to repair his misfortune, but she who occasioned it? Yes, sir, I have pledged myself, but thereby I have acquired the right of managing his estate, and of ensuring my children's fortune. He does not know what I have done for him, and he allows me full power to arrange everything. I am the head of my household, and the whole of it is already reduced to the most severe economy. Here, in two words, is what I have done, and what I propose to do." She then entered into some details, which the

minister was graciously pleased to hear. "But," continued she, "the friendship, the esteem, the confidence of my husband, all is lost to me, if you punish him for a fault with which he must reproach me till I shall have effaced it. You are just, sensible, and humane: for what would you punish him? For having loved the other half of himself too much? for having forgot himself, and sacrificed himself for me? I shall then be odious to him; and he will have reason perpetually to repeat to my children the error and dishonour into which their mother will have plunged him. Whom would you please by punishing him? The public? Ah! sir, it is an envious, spiteful public, unworthy of that complaisance. As to that part of the public which is indifferent and just, allow us to give it a sight much more useful, and more touching, than that of our ruin. It shall see that a sensible woman can reclaim a husband who is a man of honour, and that there are, to well-disposed hearts, inexhaustible resources in courage and virtue. Our reformation will be an example; and if it be honourable to us to set it, it will be glorious to follow it; whereas, if the punishment of an imprudence which hurts us alone, exceeds the offence and outlives it, the spectacle of our guiltless misfortune will excite unprofitable indignation."

The minister listened with astonishment. "Far from putting any obstacle in the way of your intentions, madam," said he, "I will second them, even while I punish your husband. He must renounce the title of his place."—"Ah, sir!"—"I have disposed of it in favour of your son, and it is out of regard, out of respect for you, that I leave the reversion to the father." Acelia's surprise, at obtaining from the minister a favour instead of a punishment, made her almost fall at his feet. "Sir," said she to him, "it is worthy of yourself to correct, in this manner, the father of a family. The tears which you see flow are the expression of my gratitude. My children, my husband, and myself, will never cease to bless you."

Melidor awaited Acelia with terror; and uneasiness gave

place to joy, when he learnt with what gentleness his prodigality was punished. "Well," said Acelia, embracing him, "are we to part to-day? Have you still any good friend whom you prefer to your wife?"

It is well known with what ease reports in Paris are spread, and destroyed as soon as propagated: Melidor's misfortune had been the news of a day or two; his re-establishment, or rather the noble part which his wife had acted, caused a kind of revolution in people's minds, and in their conversation. They talked of nothing but the wisdom and resolution of Acelia; and when she appeared abroad, with the modest and easy air of a person who neither braves nor fears the looks of the public, she was received with a respect which she had never before inspired. It was then that she perceived the value of the consideration which virtue gives; and the homages which had been paid to her youth and beauty had never flattered her so much.

Melidor, more timid, or more vain, knew not what tone to take, nor what countenance to wear. "Let us," said his wife, "appear to confess frankly that we have been imprudent, and that we are become discreet. Nobody has anything to reproach us with; let us not humiliate ourselves. If they see us pleased at being reformed, they will esteem us the more."—"And with what eyes," said he, "will you look upon that multitude of false friends, who have abandoned us?"—"With the same with which I have always beheld them, as people whom pleasure attracts, and who fly at its departure. What right had you to depend upon them? Was it for them that your feasts were given? The house of a rich man is a theatre, in which every one thinks he has paid for his place, when he has filled it agreeably. The show ended, every one retires, acquitted of all obligations. This is a disagreeable reflection; but in losing the illusion of being loved, you convert an agreeable error into an useful experience. And it is with this remedy, as with many others: its bitterness makes its efficacy.

View then the world as it is, without being mortified at having mistaken it, without boasting that you know it better. Above all, let nobody be informed of our little quarrels: let neither of us seem to have given way to the other: but let it appear, that the same spirit animates and actuates us both. Though it be not so absurd as it is accounted, to let one's self be guided by one's wife, I would not have people know that it was I who determined you."

Melidor owed everything to his wife, but nothing touched him so sensibly as this mark of delicacy, and he was so ingenuous as to confess it. Acelia had something else in view besides humouring the vanity of her husband. She wanted to induce him, by means of this very vanity, to follow the plan which she had traced for him. "If he sees all the world persuaded," said she, "that he has acted only according to his own pleasure, he will soon believe it himself, as well as the rest of the world. We stand to our own resolutions by this sentiment of liberty, which resists those of others; and the most essential point in the art of leading people, is that of concealing from them that they are led." Acelia took care, therefore, to disclaim in favour of her husband those praises which were bestowed on her; and Melidor, on his side, spoke of her with nothing but esteem.

However, she dreaded, on his account, the solitude and silence of her house. There is no keeping hold on a man who suffers from ennui; and before Melidor could fall into some employment, it was necessary he should have amusements. Acelia took care to form for him a society, not numerous but well chosen. "I do not invite you to a feast," said she to the ladies whom she secured; "but instead of pomp, we shall have pleasure. I will give you heartily a good supper, which shall cost little; we will there drink in freedom to the health of our friends; perhaps, also, we shall laugh there, a circumstance uncommon enough in the world." She kept her promise; and her husband alone still regretted

the opulence in which he had lived. Not that he did not do his best to accustom himself to a plain way of life; but one would have thought that the same void had taken possession of his soul and of his house. His eyes and ears, habituated to tumult, were as it were stupefied with calm and repose. He still viewed with envy those who were ruining themselves, like himself; and Paris, where he found himself condemned to privations, in the midst of enjoyments, became odious to him.

Acelia, who perceived it, and who pursued her plan with that constancy which is found only in women, proposed to him to go and see the estates which they had bought. But, before setting out, she charged her lawyer to hire her, instead of the hôtel which they occupied, a house genteelly plain, to live in at their return.

Of three estates which Melidor possessed, the two which brought most honour produced scarce a third of the interest of the purchase-money. It was resolved, therefore, that he should sell them. The other having been long neglected, required only outlay to become an excellent property. "This is the estate we must keep," said Acelia: "let us employ all our care in getting its value out of it. It has a wholesome air, an agreeable prospect, and a fertile soil; we will pass the pleasant part of the year there; and, believe me, we shall love one another there. Your wife will not give herself the airs, the caprices, the art of coquettes, but a sincere and tender friendship; which will constitute, if you partake it, your happiness, mine, that of our children, and the joy of our family. I know not how it is, but since I breathe the air of the country, my tastes are more simple and natural; happiness seems more within my reach, more accessible to my desires; I see it pure, and unclouded, in the innocence of rural manners; and I have, for the first time, the idea of the serenity of an innocent life, which flows in peace to the very end." Melidor heard his wife with complaisance,

and consolation diffused itself over his soul like a delicious balm.

He consented, not without repugnance, to the sale of those of his lands the rights attached to which had flattered him the most; and the good lawyer managed so well, that, in the space of six months, Melidor found himself indebted to nobody in the world.

Nothing now remained, but to strengthen him against the bent of habit; and Acelia, who knew his foibles, did not despair of extinguishing in him the taste for luxury, by instilling another more sensible and satisfactory. The estate which they had reserved, presented an extensive field for useful labours; and Acelia bethought her of forming a little council of husbandmen for the direction of them. This council was composed of seven honest, sensible villagers, to whom she gave a dinner every Sunday. This dinner was called The Banquet of the Seven Wise Men. The council was held at table, and Melidor, Acelia, and the little abbé, assisted at the deliberations. The quality of soils, and the culture which suited them; the choice of plants and seeds, the establishment of new farms, and the division of the ground into woods, pasturages, and cornfields; the distribution of the flocks, destined for fattening and labour, the direction and employment of the waters, plantations and enclosures, and even the smallest particulars of rural economy were treated in the council. Our sages, glass in hand, animated and enlightened each other; to hear them, one might have seen in fancy treasures buried in the earth, which waited only for hands to come and dig them out.

Melidor was tickled with this hope, and above all with the kind of domination which he should exercise in the conduct of these labours; but he did not think that he had means sufficient to carry them into execution. "Let us begin," said Acelia, "and the ground will assist us." They did but little

the first year, but sufficient to give Melidor a foretaste of the pleasure of creating.

The council, at Acelia's departure, received from her a small recompense, and the good grace with which she gave it enhanced the value.

Melidor, on his return to town, was enchanted with his new house. It was commodious and pleasing, furnished without pomp, but with taste. "This, my dear, is what suits us," said his wife. "There is enough to be happy in if we are wise." She had the pleasure of seeing him bored at Paris, where he found himself confounded in the crowd, and sighing after the country, whither the desire of reigning recalled him.

They went down there before the return of spring, and the sages being assembled, they regulated the labours of the year.

From the moment when Melidor saw the ground grow fruitful under his influence, and a multitude of people employed in fertilising it for him, he felt himself a greater man. A new farm, which he had established, had a tenant assigned to it by the council, and Melidor had the sensible joy of seeing the first crop.

Their enjoyment was renewed every day, as they saw the very fields, which two years before languished uncultivated, and unpeopled, covered with labourers and flocks, with woods, harvests, and herbage; and Melidor saw, with regret, the arrival of the season which recalled him to Paris.

Acelia could not resist the inclination of visiting the minister, who, in her misfortune, had stretched out his hand to her. She gave him so touching a picture of the happiness which they enjoyed, that he was moved to the bottom of his soul. "You are," said he to her, "a model wife: may such an example make, on all hearts, the impression which it makes on mine. Go on, madam, and rely on my help. It is only too much honour to be able to contribute to the happiness which you occasion."

That fortunate estate, to which our couple were recalled by the fine weather, became a smiling picture of economy and abundance. But a still more touching picture was that of the education which they gave to their children.

There was talk in the neighbourhood of a couple withdrawn from the world like themselves, who, in a pleasing solitude, made it their delight to cultivate the tender fruits of their love. "Let us go and see them," said Acelia, "let us go and take lessons from them." When they arrived they saw the image of happiness and of virtue, M. and Madam de Lisbé, in the midst of their young family, solely occupied with the care of forming the understanding and the heart.

Acelia was touched by the grace, the decency, and, above all, the air of gaiety which she remarked in these children. They had neither the rustic bashfulness, nor the indiscreet familiarity of childhood. In their address, their conversation, their language, nothing appeared but an exquisite naturalness; so very easy had habit rendered all the movements which it had directed.

"This is not a visit of ceremony," said Acelia to Madam de Lisbé; "we have come to take lessons from you in the art of bringing up our children, and to entreat you to teach us the principles and the method which you have followed with so much success."

"Alas, madam, nothing is simpler," replied Madam de Lisbé. "Our principles consist in treating children as children, in making useful things a play to them; in making what we teach them plain, and in teaching them only what they are able to understand. Our method is equally simple: it consists in leading them to instruction by curiosity; in concealing from them, beneath this bait, the idea of labour and constraint, and in directing their very curiosity, by certain thoughts which we throw in their way, and give them an inclination to grasp. The most difficult point is to excite emulation without jealousy, and in that, perhaps, we have less merit than good fortune."—

"Of course you have given them the best masters?"—"No, madam, we learnt whatever we wished to teach them. See how the dove digests the nourishment of her young ones. Let us imitate her, and from thence result two advantages, and two pleasures: that of instructing ourselves, and that of instructing our children."

"This little exertion is all the more amusing," said Monsieur de Lisbé, "in that we have reserved all abstract studies for the age of reason, and our lessons are, at present, confined to what suggests itself to the senses. Childhood is the age in which the imagination is most lively, and the memory most docile; it is to the objects of these two organs that we apply the minds of our children. The surface of the ground is an image; the history of men, and that of nature, are a succession of pictures: the natural philosophy of tongues is only sounds; the part of the mathematics to be perceived by the senses is reduced to lines; all the arts may be described. Religion itself, and moral philosophy, are better learnt by our feelings than they are conceived in idea; in a word, all our simple and primitive perceptions come to us by the senses. Now, the senses of children have more fineness, delicacy, and vivacity, than those of maturer age. It is, then, taking nature in her strength, to take her in childhood, so as to make her perceive and grasp everything which requires not the combinations of the understanding. Besides, the soul, free from all other care, is entirely at leisure to attend to this: it is greedy of knowledge, exempt from prejudice, and all the cells of the understanding and the memory being empty, we can arrange ideas there at pleasure, especially if, in the art of introducing them, we follow their natural order, if we are not in too much haste to heap one on another, and if we give them leisure to settle themselves each in their place."

"I see," said Acelia, "but without alarm, that all this demands a continued attention."—"That attention," replied Madam de Lisbé, "has nothing constraining nor painful. We

live with our children, we have them under our eyes, we converse with them, we accustom them to examine and to reflect: we assist them, without impatience, in developing their ideas, we never discourage them by a tone of ill-humour or contempt. Severity, which is only of service in remedying the faults of negligence, has scarce ever place in an unremitting education; and as we do not suffer nature to take any vicious bent, we are not obliged to put it under constraint."

"Shall I not be indiscreet," said Acelia to her, "if I show you how much I long to be present at one of your lessons?" Madam de Lisbé called her children, who were busy together in a corner of the room.—They flew to the arms of their mother with a natural joy, at which Acelia was touched. "Children," said the mother, "this lady would willingly hear you: I will put some questions to you."

Acelia admired the order and clearness of the knowledge which they had acquired; but she was still more enchanted at the grace and modesty with which they replied in their turns, at the good understanding which reigned among them, and at the lively interest which they took in each other's success. Her object was to interest Melidor in this sight, and he was moved even to tears. "How happy are you," said he again and again, to M. de Lisbé, "how happy are you in having such children! It is the sweetest of all enjoyments."

Acelia, on quitting her neighbours, requested their friendship; she kissed their children a thousand times, and prayed them to give her leave to come sometimes to instruct herself by their studies.

"What can be more astonishing, and yet what simpler?" said she to Melidor, as they went away. "Can it be, that a pleasure so pure is so little known: and that what is most natural should be what is most uncommon? People have children, and grow tired of them! and seek abroad for amusements, when they have such touching pleasures at home!"—"It is true," said Melidor, "that all children are not so well

endowed."—"And who has told us," replied Acelia, "that Heaven has not granted us the same favour? Ah, my dear, it is to spare ourselves shame that we so often reproach nature. We generally accuse her, in order to justify ourselves. Before we have a right to think her incorrigible, we should have done everything to correct her. We are neither fools nor bad people; our children ought not to be either. Let us live with them, and for them; and I promise you that they will resemble us."

"You are to have two assistants," said she in the evening to the abbé. "We have just had a foretaste of the pleasure of educating our children;" and she related what they had seen and heard. "We would follow the same plan," added she. "You, my good abbé, you shall teach them languages; Melidor is going to apply himself to the study of the arts, and of nature, in order to be able to give lessons on them. I reserve to myself what is easiest and most simple, manners, things of sentiment; and I hope, in a year, to be able to keep pace with you. You must show us the sources, and direct our studies, step by step, on the shortest plan."

The abbé applauded this emulation, and each of them set about fulfilling his task with an ardour, which, far from growing weak, only redoubled.

Melidor found no further void in the leisure of the country. It seemed to him, as if time hastened its steps. The days were not long enough to attend to the cares of agriculture, and the studies of the closet. These occupations seemed to compete which should have them. Acelia was divided, in like manner, between the cares of her household and the instruction of her children. Nature seconded her views. Her children, made docile, full of application, either by the example of their parents, or by a mutual emulation, made their journal work their diversion.

But this success, satisfying as it was to the heart of a good mother, was not her most serious object. She had ensured to

Melidor the only inexhaustible resource against the dulness of solitude, and the attraction of dissipation. "I am easy," said she, "at last," when she saw in him a determined liking for study. "It is a pleasure which costs little, which we find everywhere, which never tires, and with which we are sure of not being obliged to fly ourselves."

Melidor restored to himself, and far from being ashamed to confess that he owed his reformation to his wife, took a pride in relating all she had done to reclaim him from his errors: he ceased not to commend the courage, the understanding, the sweetness, the firmness which she had combined in doing it; and all the world as they listened, said, "*This is a Wife of Ten Thousand!*"

Note to "A WIFE OF TEN THOUSAND."—P. 342 *sq.*

In the latter part of this story two of the most absorbing crazes of the eighteenth century—those for "improvement" and for education—will be found interestingly exemplified. The suggestions, as far as England goes, of Arthur Young in the first respect, of Day, the author of "Sandford and Merton," and the Edgeworths (who owed much to Marmontel) in the second, are strong.



Friendship put to the test.

IN one of those schools of morality to which the English youth go to study the duties of a man and a citizen, to enlighten the understanding and elevate the soul, Nelson and Blandford were distinguished by a friendship worthy of the golden age. As it was founded on a perfect agreement of sentiments and principles, time only served to confirm it; and the more it was enlightened every day, the more intimate it every day became. But this friendship was put to a test, which it had some difficulty in supporting.

Their studies being finished, each of them took to that way of life, to which his nature invited him: Blandford, active, robust, and courageous, determined for the profession of arms, and for the sea-service. Voyages were his school. Inured to fatigues, instructed by dangers, he arrived, from rank to rank, at the command of a vessel.

Nelson, endowed with a manly eloquence, and with a wise

and profound genius, was of the number of those deputies, of whom the national senate is composed; and in a short time he made himself famous there.

Thus each of them served his country, happy in the good which he did it: while Blandford sustained the shock of war, and of the elements, Nelson stood proof against favouritism and ambition. It seemed as though these examples of heroic zeal, jealous of each other, competed in virtue and glory, or rather that, at the two ends of the world, the same spirit animated them both.

"Be of good heart," said Nelson, in his letters to Blandford, "honour friendship, by preserving our country: live for the one, if it be possible, and die for the other, if there be occasion: a death, worthy of its tears, is more valuable than the longest life."—"Be of good heart," said Blandford, in his letters to Nelson, "defend the rights of the people and of liberty: a smile from one's country is of more value than the favour of kings."

Blandford enriched himself while he did his duty: he returned to London with the prizes he had taken on the Indian seas. But the most valuable part of his treasure was a young Indian girl, of a beauty that would have been uncommon in any climate. A Bramin, to whom Heaven had given this only daughter in reward for his virtues, had consigned her, in his dying moments, to the hands of the generous Englishman.

Coraly had not yet attained her fifteenth year; her father made her his delight, and the tenderest object of his cares. The village in which he dwelt was taken and pillaged by the English. Solinzeb (that was the Bramin's name) presented himself on the threshold of his habitation. "Hold!" said he to the soldiers, who had reached his humble sanctuary, "hold! Whoever you be, the God of nature, the beneficent God, is yours and mine: respect his minister in me."

These words, the sound of his voice, his venerable air, impressed respect; but a fatal missile was on its way, and the

Bramin fell mortally wounded into the arms of his trembling daughter.

At that instant Blandford arrived, for the purpose of checking the fury of the soldiery. He cried out, he forced his way through them, he saw the Bramin leaning on a young girl scarce able to support him, and who, tottering herself, bathed the old man with her tears. At this sight, nature, beauty, love, exercised all their influence on Blandford's soul. He easily discovered in Solinzeb, the father of her who embraced him with such affectionate sorrow. "Barbarians," said he to the soldiers, "be gone! Is it feebleness and innocence, old age and childhood, that you ought to attack?"—"Mortal, sacred to me," said he to the Bramin, "live, live, suffer me to repair the crime of these savages." At these words he took him into his arms, made him lie down, examined the wound, and procured him all the assistance of art. Coraly, witness to the piety, the sensibility of this stranger, thought she saw a God descend from heaven to succour and comfort her father.

Blandford, who would not quit Solinzeb, endeavoured to soften the sorrow of his daughter; but she seemed to have a presage of her misfortune, and passed the nights and days in tears.

When the Bramin perceived his end approaching, "I would fain," said he to Blandford, "go and die on the border of the Ganges, and purify myself in its waves."—"Father," replied the young Englishman to him, "it would be easy to give you that consolation if all hope were lost. But wherefore add to the peril in which you are, that of so painful a removal? It is so far from hence to the Ganges! And then (be not offended at my sincerity) it is purity of heart which the God of nature requires; and if you have observed the law which he has engraven on our souls, if you have done mankind all the good that you have been able to do, if you have avoided doing them ill, the God who loves them will love you."

"Thou art full of consolation," said the Bramin. "But

how comes it that thou, who reducest the duties of mankind to simple piety, and purity of manners, art at the head of those robbers who ravage India, and who bathe themselves in blood?"

"You have seen," said Blandford, "whether I authorise such ravages. Commerce draws us to India; and if men acted uprightly, that mutual exchange of conveniences would be just and peaceable. The violence of your masters obliged us to take arms; and the transition is so quick from defence to attack, that at the first success, at the smallest advantage, the oppressed becomes the oppressor. War is a state of violence which it is not easy to soften. Alas! when man becomes unnatural, how can he be just? It is my duty here to protect the commerce of the English, to make my country honoured and respected. In the discharge of this duty, I spare, as far as possible, the effusion of blood and tears which war occasions. Happy shall I be if the death of a good man, the death of Coraly's father, be one of those crimes and misfortunes which I am destined to save the world!" Thus spoke the virtuous Blandford, and embraced the old man.

"Thou wouldest persuade me," said Solinzeb, "that virtue is everywhere the same. But thou believest not in the God Vishnou and his nine metamorphoses: how can a good man refuse his assent to them?"—"Father," replied the Englishman, "there are millions of people upon the earth who have never heard either of Vishnou, or of his adventures; for whom however the sun rises every day, who breathe a pure air, who drink wholesome waters, and on whom earth lavishes the fruits of the seasons. Would you believe it? There are among these people, as well as among the children of Brahma, virtuous hearts, and good men. Equity, candour, uprightness, beneficence, and piety are in veneration among them, even among the wicked. O my father! The dreams of the imagination differ according to climate, but the mind is everywhere the same, and the light which is its source is as widely diffused as that of the sun."

"This stranger enlightens and astonishes me," said Solinzeb to himself: "all that my heart, my reason, the inward voice of nature tell me to believe, he believes also; and of my worship he denies only that part which I have so much trouble myself not to deem absurd."—"Thou thinkest then," said he to Blandford, "that a good man may die in peace?"—"Certainly."—"I think so too, and I await death as a gentle sleep. But when I am gone, what will become of my daughter? I see nothing left in my country but slavery and desolation. My daughter had only me in the world, and in a few moments I shall be no more."—"Ah!" said the young Englishman, "if to her misfortune death deprives her of a father, deign to confide her to my care. I call Heaven to witness that her chastity, innocence, and liberty shall be a deposit guarded by honour, and for ever inviolable."—"And in what principles shall she be brought up?"—"In yours, if you please; in mine, if you will allow me; but at all events in that modesty and virtue which are everywhere the glory of woman."—"Young man," replied the Bramin with an august and threatening air, "God has just heard thy words; and the old man to whom thou now speakest will perhaps in an hour be with him."—"You have no need," said Blandford to him, "to make me feel the sacredness of my promises. I am but a feeble mortal; but nothing under heaven is more immovable than the honour of my heart." He spoke these words with such firmness, that the Bramin was penetrated by them. "Come, Coraly," said he to his daughter, "come, embrace thy dying, embrace also thy new, father: let him be, after me, thy guide and thy support. There, my daughter," added he, "is the book of the law of thy forefathers, the *Veda:* after having well meditated on it, suffer thyself to be instructed in the creed of this virtuous stranger, and choose that of the two forms of worship which shall seem to thee the most proper to make people virtuous."

The night following the Bramin expired. His daughter,

who filled the air with her cries, could not tear herself from the livid and cold corpse which she bathed with her tears. At last, sorrow exhausted her strength, and the attendants availed themselves of her fainting to carry her away from the melancholy place.

Blandford, whom his duty recalled from Asia to Europe, carried thither with him his pupil; and though she was beautiful and easy to seduce, though he was young and enamoured, he respected her innocence. During the voyage, he employed himself in teaching her a little English, in giving her an idea of the manners of Europe, and in disengaging her docile mind from the prejudices of her country.

Nelson came to meet his friend. They saw each other again with the most sensible joy. But the first sight of Coraly struck and afflicted Nelson. "What are you doing with this child?" said he to Blandford in a severe tone. "Is she a captive, a slave? Have you carried her off from her parents? Have you made nature mourn?" Blandford related what had passed; he gave him so touching a portrait of the innocence, candour, and sensibility of the young Indian, that Nelson himself was moved at it. "This is my design," continued Blandford: "she shall be instructed in our manners at my mother's, and under her eyes. I will form that simple and docile heart, and if she can be happy with me, I will marry her."—"I am easy, and I recognise my friend."

The surprises and different emotions of a young stranger, to whom everything is new, have been often described; Coraly experienced them all. But her happy facility in grasping, and comprehending everything, even outstripped the pains which they took to instruct her. Wit, talent, and grace were in her innate gifts; there was only the trouble of developing them by a slight culture. She was near sixteen, and Blandford was about to marry her, when death deprived him of his mother. Coraly lamented her as if she had been her own; and the

pains which she took to console Blandford, touched him sensibly.—But during the mourning, which retarded the nuptials, he had orders to embark on a new expedition. He went to see Nelson, and he confided to him, not the grief which he felt at quitting the young Indian—Nelson would have made him blush at that—but his grief at leaving her to herself, in the midst of a world which was unknown to her. "If my mother," said he, "were still living, she would be her guide, but the ill fortune which pursues this poor girl, has taken away from her her only support."—"Have you then forgot," said Nelson, "that I have a sister, and that my house is your own?"—"Ah, Nelson," replied Blandford, fixing his eyes on his, "if you knew what a charge it is that you would have me confide to you!" At these words Nelson smiled with disdain. "This uneasiness," said he, "is a fine compliment to us both. You dare not trust me with a woman!" Blandford, in confusion, blushed. "Pardon my weakness:" said he, "it made me see danger where your virtue finds none. I judged of your heart by my own: it is me that my fear humbles. Let us say no more of it: I shall set out in peace, leaving the pledge of my love under the guard of friendship. But, my dear Nelson, if I die, let me request you to take my place."—"Yes, your place as father, I promise you: ask no more."—"Enough: nothing further detains me."

The adieus of Coraly and Blandford were mingled with tears; but Coraly's tears were not those of love. A lively gratitude, a respectful friendship, were the tenderest sentiments with which Blandford had inspired her. Her own sensibility was not known to her; the dangerous advantage of developing it was reserved for Nelson.

Blandford was handsomer than his friend; but his figure, like his character, had a manly and austere haughtiness in it. The sentiments which he had conceived for his pupil seemed to have given him the disposition of a father rather than of a lover: his attentions were without complaisance, his kindness

without charms, his concern affectionate, but solemn, and his desire was that of rendering her happy with him rather than of being happy with her.

Nelson, who was of a more engaging temper, had also more sweetness in his features and his language. His eyes especially, his eyes expressed the eloquence of the soul. His look, the most sympathising in the world, seemed to penetrate to the bottom of people's hearts, and to procure him a secret correspondence with them. His voice thundered when there was a necessity to defend the interests of his country, her laws, her glory, her liberty, but in familiar conversation it was full of sensibility and charm. What rendered him still more engaging, was the air of modesty diffused over his whole person. This man, who at the head of his nation would have made a tyrant tremble, was in company of a timid bashfulness: one single word of commendation made him blush.

Lady [Juliet] Albury, his sister, was a widow of much discretion, and an excellent heart; but of that kind of uneasy prudence which always anticipates misfortune, and accelerates instead of preventing it. It was she who was charged with consoling the young Indian. "I have lost my second father," said this amiable girl to her. "I have now only you and Nelson in the world. I will love you, I will obey you. My life and heart are yours." While she was yet embracing Juliet, Nelson arrived, and Coraly rose with a smiling and heavenly countenance, but still bedewed with tears.

"Well," said Nelson to his sister, "have you consoled her a little?"—"Yes, I am consoled, I have no further complaint," cried the young Indian, at the same time wiping her fine black eyes. Then making Nelson seat himself by Juliet's side, and falling on her knees before them, she took their hands, put them one in the other, and pressing them tenderly in her own, "Here is my mother," said she to Nelson, with a look which would have softened marble: "and you, Nelson, what will you be to me?"—"I, madam? Your good friend."—"*My*

good friend! that is charming! then I shall be your good friend too? Give me no other name."—"Yes, my good friend, my dear Coraly, your frankness delights me."—"My God," said he to his sister, "what a beautiful girl! She will be the delight of your life."—"Yes, if she is not the misery of yours," replied the foreseeing sister.—Nelson smiled with disdain. "No," said he, "love never disputes in my soul the rights of sacred friendship. Be easy, sister, and employ yourself in peace, in the care of cultivating this beautiful disposition. Blandford will be enchanted with her, if, at his return, she is mistress of our language. For we may perceive in her ideas, shadows of sentiment, which she is unhappy at not being able to express. Her eyes, her gestures, her features, everything about her proclaims ingenious thoughts, which only want words to call them forth. This, sister, will be an amusement to you, and you will see her mind open like a flower."—"Yes, brother, like a flower with a multitude of hidden thorns."

Lady Albury constantly gave English lessons to her pupil, and the latter made them every day more interesting, by intermingling with them strokes of sentiment of a vivacity and delicacy which belong only to pure nature. It was a triumph to her but to make discovery of a word, which expressed any gentle affection of the soul. She made the most natural, the most touching applications of them: Nelson arrived; she flew to him, and repeated her lesson to him with a joy and simplicity which as yet he found only amusing. Juliet alone saw the danger, and tried to prevent it.

She began, by making Coraly understand that it was not polite to *thee* and *thou* it, and that it was proper to say *you*: unless between a brother and a sister. Coraly made her explain what politeness was, and asked what it was good for, if brother and sister had no need of it? She was told, that in the world it supplied the place of good-humour. She concluded, that it was useless to those who were well disposed

to each other. It was added, that politeness displayed a desire of obliging and of pleasing. She replied, that this desire displayed itself without politeness: then giving for an example Juliet's little dog, which never quitted her, and caressed her perpetually, she asked if he was polite. Juliet intrenched herself behind the punctilios of decorum which approved not, said she, the too free and joyous air of Coraly towards Nelson; and Coraly, who had an idea of jealousy, because nature gives us the sensation of it, took into her head that the sister was jealous of the kindnesses which her brother did her. "No," said she to her, "I will afflict you no longer. I love you, I submit, and I will say *you* to Nelson."

He was surprised at this change in Coraly's language, and complained of it to Juliet. "The *you*," said he, "displeases me in her mouth: it agrees not with her simplicity."—"It displeases me too," replied the Indian: "it has something rebuffing and severe; whereas the *thou* is so soft! so intimate! so attracting!"—"Do you hear, sister? She begins to understand the language."—"Ha! it is not that which makes me uneasy: with a soul like hers, one expresses one's self but too well."—"Explain to me," said Coraly to Nelson, "whence can arise the ridiculous custom of saying *you*, in speaking to a single person."—"It arises, child, from the pride and weakness of man: he perceives that he is insignificant, being but one: he endeavours to double himself, to multiply himself in idea."—"Yes, I comprehend that folly; but thou, Nelson, thou art not vain enough. . . ."—"Again!" interrupted Juliet, with a severe tone.—"Hey! what, sister, are you going to chide her! Come, Coraly, come to me."—"I forbid her."—"How cruel you are! Is she in danger with me? Do you suspect me of laying snares for her? Ah! leave her this pure nature; leave her the amiable candour of her country and age. Wherefore tarnish in her that flower of innocence, more precious than virtue itself, which our factitious manners have so much difficulty in supplying? It seems to me that nature

is afflicted when the idea of evil penetrates into the soul. Alas! it is a venomous plant which grows wild but too readily, without our giving ourselves the trouble of sowing it." —"What you say, is very fine to be sure; but since evil exists, we must avoid it; and in order to avoid it, we must know it."—"Ah! my poor little Coraly," said Nelson, "into what a world art thou transplanted! What manners are those, in which we are obliged to lose one-half of our innocence, in order to save the other!"

In proportion as moral ideas increased in the young Indian's mind, she lost her gaiety, and her natural ingenuousness. Every new institution seemed to her a new fetter. "Another duty!" said she. "Another prohibition! My soul is enveloped as with a net, it will soon be unable to stir." That what was hurtful should be made criminal, Coraly comprehended without difficulty; but she could not imagine any harm in what did no harm to anybody. "What greater happiness in living together," said she, "than to see one another with pleasure? and why conceal from ourselves so sweet an impression? Is not pleasure a blessing? Why then hide it from the person who occasions it? People pretend to feel it with those whom they do not love, and to feel none with those whom they do! Some enemy of truth devised these manners."

Reflections of this sort plunged her into melancholy; and when Juliet reproached her with it, "You know the cause of it," said she: "everything that is contrary to nature must make nature sorrowful, and in your manners everything is contrary to nature." Coraly, in her little impatiences, had something so soft and touching, that Lady Albury accused herself of afflicting her by too much rigour. Her manner of consoling her, and of restoring to her her good humour, was by employing her in little services, and by advising her about as her child. The pleasure of thinking that she was useful, flattered her sensibility: she foresaw the instant, in order to

seize it; but the same attentions that she paid to Juliet, she wanted to pay to Nelson, and she was distressed by having her zeal checked. "The good offices of servitude," said she, "are low and vile, because they are not voluntary; but from the moment that they are free, there is no longer shame, and friendship ennobles them. Fear not, my good friend, that I shall suffer myself to be abased. Though very young, before I quitted India, I knew the dignity of the tribe in which I was born; and when your fine ladies and young lords come and examine me with such familiar curiosity, their disdain only elevates my soul, and I perceive that I am fully their equal. But with you and Nelson, who love me as your daughter, what can there be humiliating to me?"

Nelson himself seemed sometimes confused at the trouble she took. "You are very vain then," said she to him, "since you blush at having need of me! I am not so proud as you: do things for me; I shall be flattered with it."

All these strokes of an ingenuous and sensible soul made Lady Albury uneasy. "I tremble," said she to Nelson, when they were alone, "I tremble, lest she love you, and lest that love occasion her unhappiness." He took this hint for an insult to innocence. "See there now," said he, "how the abuse of words alters and displaces ideas. Coraly loves me, I know it; but she loves me as she loves you. Is there anything more natural than to attach one's self to the person who does us good? Is it a fault in this girl, if the tender and lively expression of a sentiment so just, and so laudable, is profaned in our manners? Whatever criminality we affix to it, has that ever come into her thought?"—"No, brother, you do not understand me. Nothing is more innocent than her love for you; but . . . "—"But, sister, why suppose, why insist that it must be love? It is true and pure friendship, which she has for you and me alike."—"You persuade yourself, Nelson, that it is the same sentiment; will you make trial of it? Let us pretend to separate, and to reduce her to

the choice of quitting the one or the other."—"There you are! tricks and stratagems. Why impose on her? Why teach her to dissemble? Alas! does her soul practise disguise?"—"Yes, I begin to put her not at her ease: she has grown afraid of me, ever since she has begun to love you."—"And why have you inspired her with that fear? You would have her be ingenuous, and you make it dangerous to be so: you recommend truth, and, if it escape, you make it a reproach. Ah! Nature is not to blame: she would be frank if she had liberty: it is the art which is employed to constrain her that gives her a bias to falsity."—"These are very grave reflections for what is in fact a mere jest! For, after all, what does the whole amount to? To make Coraly uneasy for a moment, in order to see to which side her heart will incline: that is all."—"That is all: but it is a falsehood; and, which is worse, an afflicting one."—"Let us think no more of it: it answers no end to examine what we will not see."—"I, sister! I only want information, to know how to behave. The means alone displeased me; but no matter: what do you require of me?"—"Silence, and a serious air. Coraly comes; now you shall hear."

"What is the matter now?" said Coraly, coming up to them. "Nelson in one corner! Juliet in the other! Have you quarrelled?"—"We have just taken," said Juliet to her, "a resolution which afflicts us; but then it was necessary to come to it. We are no longer to live together; each of us is to have a separate house; and we have agreed to leave you the choice."

At these words, Coraly gazed at Juliet, her eyes motionless with sorrow and astonishment. "It is I," said she, "that am the cause of your wanting to quit Nelson. You are displeased that he loves me; you are jealous of the pity with which a young orphan inspires him. Alas! what will you not envy, if you envy pity—if you envy her who loves you, and who would give for you her life, the only valuable thing which is

left her? You are unjust, my lady, yes, you are unjust. Your brother, in loving me, loves not you less, and if it were possible he would love you more, for my sentiments would



Coraly gazed at Juliet, her eyes motionless with sorrow and astonishment.

pass into his soul, and I have nothing to inspire into him towards you but complaisance and love."

Juliet would fain have persuaded her, that she and Nelson parted good friends. "It is impossible," said she. "You

made it your delight to live together. And since when has it become necessary that you should have two houses? People who love one another are never too crowded; distance pleases only those who hate each other. You, O Heaven! You to hate!" resumed she. "And who will love, if two hearts, so good, so virtuous, do not? It is I, wretch that I am, who have brought trouble into the house of peace. I will banish myself from it: yes, I beseech you, send me back into my own country. I shall there find souls sensible to my misfortune and to my tears, who will not make it a crime in me if I inspire a little pity."

"You forget," said Juliet to her, "that you are our charge." —"I am free," replied the young Indian proudly: "I may dispose of myself. What should I do here? With whom should I live? With what eyes would one of you regard me, after I had deprived you of the other? Should I supply the place of a sister to Nelson? Should I console you for the loss of a brother? To occasion the unhappiness of what alone I love; no, you shall not part: my arms shall be a chain to you." Then running towards Nelson, and seizing him by the hand —"Come," said she to him, "swear to your sister, that you love nothing in the world so well as her." Nelson, touched to the bottom of his soul, suffered himself to be led to his sister's feet; and Coraly throwing herself on Juliet's neck, "You," continued she, "if you are my mother, pardon him for having loved your child: his heart was enough for us both, and if you are any loser there, mine shall indemnify you for it."— "Ah! dangerous girl," said Juliet, affected as she was, "what sorrows will you soon cause us!"—"Ah, sister," cried Nelson, who felt himself pressed by Coraly against Juliet's bosom, "have you the heart to afflict this child?"

Coraly, enchanted at her triumph, kissed Juliet tenderly, at the very instant when Nelson put his face to his sister's. He felt his cheek touch the glowing cheek of Coraly, still wet with tears. He was surprised at the confusion and ecstasy

which this accident occasioned in him. "Happily," said he, "it is only a simple emotion of the senses: it goes not to the soul. I am myself, and I am sure of myself." He dissembled, however, from his sister, what he would fain have concealed from himself. He tenderly consoled Coraly, confessing to her that all they had just said to her, to make her uneasy, was nothing more than a jest. "But what is no jest," added he, "is the counsel which I give you, my dear Coraly, of distrusting your own heart, which is too innocent, and too sympathetic. Nothing is more charming than this affecting and tender disposition, but the best things very often become dangerous by their excess."

"Will you not quiet my uneasiness?" said Coraly to Juliet, as soon as Nelson was retired. "Whatever you say, it is not natural to make sport of my sorrow. There is something serious in this pastime. I see you deeply moved; Nelson himself was seized with I know not what terror; I felt his hand tremble in mine; my eyes met his, and I saw there something tender and sorrowful at the same time. He dreads my sensibility. He seems to be afraid that I should deliver myself up to it. My good friend, can it be any harm to love?"—"Yes, child, to speak precisely, it is a misfortune both for you and for him. A woman, you may have seen it in the Indies as well as among us, a woman is destined for the society of one man alone; and by that solemn and sacred union, the pleasure of loving becomes a duty to her."—"I know it," said Coraly ingenuously: "that is what they call marriage."—"Yes, Coraly, and that friendship is laudable between two married persons; but till then it is forbidden."—"That is not reasonable," said the young Indian: "for before uniting ourselves, we must know whether we love each other; and it is but in proportion to our love beforehand, that we are sure of loving afterwards. For instance, if Nelson loved me as I love him, it would be clear that both of us had met their counterpart."—"And do you not see in how many respects,

and by how many compacts, we are slaves; and that you are not destined for Nelson?"—"I understand you," said Coraly, looking down; "I am poor, and Nelson is rich; but my ill fortune at least does not forbid me to honour and cherish beneficent virtue. If a tree had sentiment, it would please itself at seeing the person who cultivates it repose himself under its shade, breathe the perfume of its flowers, and taste the sweetness of its fruits: I am that tree, cultivated by you two, and nature has given me a soul."

Juliet smiled at the comparison; but she soon gave her to understand, that nothing would be less becoming, than what to her seemed so just. Coraly heard her, and blushed; from that time her gaiety, her natural ingenuousness, were succeeded by the most reserved air and the most timid conversation. What hurt her most in our manners, though she might have seen examples of it in India, was the excessive inequality of riches: but she had not yet been humiliated by it: she was so now for the first time.

"Madam," said she, next day, to Juliet, "my life is spent in instructing myself in things which are rather superfluous. An industry which furnishes bread, would be much more useful to me. It is a resource, which I beseech you to be pleased to procure me."—"You will never be reduced to that," said Lady Albury, "and not to mention us, it is not for nothing that Blandford has assumed towards you the quality of father."—"Favours," replied Coraly, "bind us much oftener than we would choose. It is not disgraceful to receive them; but I clearly perceive that it is still more honourable to do without them." It was in vain that Juliet complained of this excess of delicacy: Coraly would not hear of amusements, or of useless studies. Amidst the labours which suit feeble hands, she chose those which required the most address and understanding, and, on applying herself to them, her only anxiety was to know whether they afforded a subsistence. "You wish to leave me then?" said Juliet. "I would put myself,"

replied Coraly, "above all wants, except that of loving you. I would have it in my power to rid you of me, if I am any obstacle to your happiness; but if I can contribute to it, entertain no fear of my removing myself. I am useless, and yet I am dear to you; that disinterestedness is an example which I think myself worthy of imitating."

Nelson knew not what to think of Coraly's application to a labour merely mechanical, and of the disgust which had seized her for matters of pure entertainment. He saw, with the same surprise, the modest simplicity which she had assumed in her dress; he asked her the reason. "I am trying what it is to be poor," replied she, with a smile, and her lowered eyes were moistened with her tears. These words, these escaping tears touched him to the soul. "O Heaven!" said he, "can my sister have made her afraid of seeing herself poor and desolate?" As soon as he was alone with Juliet, he pressed her to clear up the matter to him.

"Alas!" said he, after having heard her, "what cruel pains you take to poison her life and mine! Though you were less certain of her innocence, are you not persuaded of my honour?"—"Ah, Nelson! It is not the crime, it is the misfortune which terrifies me. You see with what dangerous security she delivers herself up to the pleasure of seeing you; how she attaches herself insensibly to you; how nature leads her, without her knowledge, into the snare. Ah, brother! at your age and hers, the name of friendship is but a veil. If I could but leave you both under the illusion! But, Nelson, your duty is dearer to me than your ease. Coraly is destined for your friend; he himself has confided her to you; and, without intending it, you take her from him."—"I, sister! What do you dare to predict?"—"What you ought to shun. I will suppose that at the same time that she loves you, she consents to give herself to Blandford: I will suppose that he flatters himself with being loved by her, and is happy with her; will she be happy with him? Did you feel only pity, of

which she is so worthy, what sorrow would you not feel at having troubled, perhaps for ever, the repose of this unfortunate young creature? But it would be a prodigy for you to see her consume with love, and do nothing more than pity her. You will love her. . . . Will, do I say? Ah, Nelson, Heaven grant that you do not already!"—"Yes, sister, it is time to take whatever resolution you please. I only beg of you to spare the sensibility of this innocent soul, and not to afflict her too much."—"Your absence will afflict her without doubt; yet that alone can cure her. This is the time of the year for the country; I was to follow you there, and to bring Coraly; do you go alone: we will remain in London. Write, however, to Blandford, that we need him."

From the moment when the Indian saw that Nelson was leaving her in London with Juliet, she thought herself cast into a desert, and abandoned by all nature. But as she had learned to be ashamed, and in consequence to dissemble, she pretended, as an excuse for her sorrow, the blame she took to herself for having separated them from each other. "You were to have followed him," said she to Lady Albury; "it is I that keep you here. Ah, wretch that I am! leave me alone, abandon me." And saying these words, she wept bitterly. The more Juliet tried to divert her, the more she increased her sorrows. All the objects which surrounded her, served but faintly to touch her senses; one idea alone possessed her soul. A kind of violence was needed to draw her from it, but the instant she was left to herself, it seemed as if her thought fled back again to the object which she had been made to quit. If the name of Nelson was pronounced before her, a deep blush overspread her visage, her bosom heaved, her lips trembled, her whole body was seized with a visible shiver. Juliet surprised her as she walked, tracing out on the sand, from place to place, the letters of that dear name. Nelson's picture decorated Juliet's apartment; Coraly's eyes never failed to fix themselves upon it, as soon as they were free: it

was in vain she tried to turn them aside; they soon returned there again, as it were of themselves, and by one of those emotions, in which the soul is accomplice, and not confidante. The ennui into which she was plunged, dispersed at this sight; her work fell out of her hands, and the utmost tenderness of sorrow and love animated her beauty.

Lady Albury thought it her duty to remove this feeble image. This was to Coraly the most distressful misfortune. Her despaïr now broke all bounds. "Cruel friend," said she to Juliet, "you delight in afflicting me. You would have all my life be only sorrow and bitterness. If anything softens my troubles, you cruelly take it from me. You are not content with banishing from me the man I love; his very shadow has too many charms for me, you envy me the pleasure, the feeble pleasure of seeing it."—"Ah, unhappy girl! what would you?"—"I would love, adore him, live for him, while he may live for another. I hope nothing, I ask nothing, my hands are sufficient to enable me to live, my heart is sufficient to enable me to love. I am troublesome to you, perhaps odious; remove me from you, and leave me only that image wherein his soul breathes, or wherein I think at least I see it breathe. I will see it, I will speak to it, I will persuade myself that it sees my tears flow, that it hears my sighs, and that it is touched by them."—"And wherefore, my dear Coraly, nourish this cruel flame, which devours you? I afflict you, but it is for your good, and for Nelson's peace. Would you make him unhappy? He will be so, if he knows that you love him; and still more so if he loves you. You are not in a condition to hear my reasons; but this inclination, which you think so sweet, would be the poison of his life. Have pity, my dear child, on your friend, and my brother: spare him remorse, and mental struggles, which would bring him to his grave." Coraly trembled at this discourse. She pressed Lady Albury to tell her how Nelson's love for her could be so fatal to him. "To explain myself farther," said Juliet, "would be to

render odious to you, what you ought for ever to cherish. But the most sacred of all duties forbids him the hope of being yours."

How is it possible to express the distress into which Coraly's soul was plunged? "What manners, what a country," said she, "wherein one cannot dispose of one's self; wherein the first of all blessings, mutual love, is a terrible evil! I must tremble then at seeing Nelson again! I must tremble at pleasing him! At pleasing him! alas! I would give my life to be for one moment as amiable in his eyes as he is in mine. Let me banish myself from this fatal shore, where it is thought a misfortune to be loved."

Coraly heard, every day, of vessels sailing for her country. She resolved to embark, without taking leave of Juliet. Only one evening, on going to bed, Juliet perceived that as she kissed her hand, her lips pressed her more tenderly than usual, and that some profound sighs escaped her. "She leaves me more moved than ever before," said Juliet, alarmed. "Her eyes are fixed on mine, with the most lively expression of tenderness and sorrow. What is passing in her soul?" This uneasiness disturbed her the whole night, and the next morning she sent to know if Coraly was not yet up. They told her that she had gone out, alone, and in a very plain dress, and that she had taken the way to the water-side. Lady Albury got up in distress, and ordered them to go in pursuit of the Indian.—They found her on board a vessel begging her passage, environed by sailors, whom her beauty, her grace, her youth, the sound of her voice, and, above all, the naïve simplicity of her request, ravished with surprise and admiration. She had nothing with her, but bare necessaries. Everything that had been given her which was valuable, she had left behind, excepting a little heart of crystal, which she had received from Nelson.

At the name of Lady Albury, she submitted without resistance, and suffered herself to be taken home. She

appeared before her a little confused at her elopement, but to her reproaches, she answered, that she was unhappy and free. "What, my dear Coraly! do you see nothing here but unhappiness?"—"If I saw only my own," said she, "I should never leave you. It is Nelson's unhappiness that frights me, and it is for his peace that I would fly hence."

Juliet knew not what to reply: she durst not talk to her of the rights which Blandford had acquired over her: this would have been to make her hate him, as the cause of her unhappiness. She chose rather to lessen her fears. "I could not conceal from you," said she to her, "all the danger of a fruitless love; but the evil is not without remedy. Six months of absence, reason, friendship, how can we tell? Another object, perhaps . . ." The Indian interrupted her. "Say death: there is my only remedy. What! Will reason cure me of loving the most accomplished, the most worthy of men? Will six months of absence give me a soul that loves him not? Does time change nature? Friendship will pity me: but will it cure me? Another object! . . . You do not think so. You do not do me that injustice. There are not two Nelsons in the world; but though there were a thousand, I have but one heart: that is given away. It is, you say, a fatal gift: that I do not comprehend; but if it be so, suffer me to banish myself from Nelson, to hide from him my person and my tears. He is not insensible, he would be moved at it; and if it be a misfortune to him to love me, pity might lead him to it. Alas! who can, with indifference, see himself cherished as a father, revered as a god? Who can see himself loved as I love him, and not love in his turn?"—"You will not expose him to that danger," replied Juliet; "you will conceal your weakness from him, and you will triumph over it. No, Coraly, it is not the strength that is wanting to you, but the courage to be virtuous."—"Alas! I have courage against misfortune; but is there any against love? And which of the virtues would you have me oppose

to him? They all act in concert on his side. No, my lady, you talk to no purpose: you throw clouds over my understanding; you shed not the least light on it. Let me see and hear Nelson: he shall decide upon my life."

Lady Albury, in the most cruel perplexity, seeing the unhappy Coraly withering and pining in tears, and begging to be suffered to depart, resolved to write to Nelson, that he might come and persuade the poor girl from her design of returning to India, and preserve her from that disgust of life which daily consumed her. But Nelson himself was not less to be pitied. Scarce had he quitted Coraly, when he perceived the danger of seeing her, by the repugnance which he had to leaving her.—All that had appeared only play to him with her, became serious, when he was deprived of her. In the silence of solitude, he had interrogated his soul: he had found there friendship languishing, zeal for the public good weakened, nay almost extinguished, and love alone ruling there, with that sweet and terrible sway which he exercises over good hearts. He perceived, with horror, that his very reason had suffered itself to be seduced. The rights of Blandford were no longer so sacred; and the involuntary crime of depriving him of Coraly's heart, was at least very excusable; after all, the Indian was free, and Blandford himself would not have wished to impose it on her as a duty to be his.

"Ah, wretch!" cried Nelson, terrified at these ideas; "whither does a blind passion lead me astray! The poison of vice gains upon me: my heart is already corrupted. Is it for me to examine whether the charge, which is committed to me, belong to the person who commits it? And am I made the judge, to whom it belongs, when I have promised to keep it? The Indian is free; but am I so? Should I doubt the rights of Blandford, if it were not in order to usurp them? My crime was, at first, involuntary; but it is no longer so, the moment I consent to it. I to justify perjury! I to think a faithless friend excusable! Who would have told thee, Nelson,

who would have told thee, on embracing the virtuous Blandford, that thou shouldest call in doubt, whether it were permitted thee to ravish from him the woman who is to be his wife, and whom he delivered up to thy trust? To what a degree does Love debase a man! And what a strange revolution his intoxication makes in the heart! Ah! let him rend mine, if he will; he shall not make it either perfidious or base; and if my reason abandon me, my conscience at least shall not betray me. Its light is incorruptible: the cloud of passion cannot obscure it: there is my guide; and friendship, honour, and fidelity, have still some support."

In the meantime Coraly's image pursued him perpetually. If he had only seen her with all her charms, arrayed in simple beauty, bearing in her countenance the serenity of innocence, the smile of candour on her lips, the fire of desire in her eyes, and in all the graces of her person an attractive air of voluptuousness, he must have found in his principles, in the severity of his morals, sufficient force to withstand seduction. But he imagined that amiable girl as sensitive as himself, more feeble, with no other defence than a prudence which was not her own, innocently abandoning herself to an inclination which would be her unhappiness; and the pity with which she inspired him served as fuel to his love. Nelson blamed himself for loving Coraly, but forgave himself for pitying her. Sensible of the evils which he was on the point of causing, he could not paint to himself her tears, without thinking of the fine eyes which were to shed them, and the heaving bosom which they would bedew: and so the resolution of forgetting her, made her still dearer to him. He attached himself to her by renouncing her: but in proportion as he perceived himself weaker, he became more courageous. "Let me give over," said he, "the thoughts of a cure: I exhaust myself in fruitless efforts. It is a fit which I must suffer to go off. I burn, I languish, I die; but all that is mere suffering, and I am answerable to nobody but myself for what passes within.

Provided nothing escape me from without, that discovers my passion, my friend has no reason to complain. It is only a misfortune to be weak; and I have the courage to be unhappy."

It was in this resolution of dying, rather than betraying his friendship, that he received the letter from his sister. He read it with an emotion, an ecstasy that was inexpressible. "Oh, sweet and tender victim," said he, "thou groanest, thou wouldst sacrifice thyself to my repose, and to my duty! Pardon! Heaven is my witness, that I feel, more strongly than thyself, all the pangs which I occasion thee. Oh, may my friend, thy husband, soon arrive, and wipe away thy precious tears! He will love thee as I love thee; he will make his own happiness thine. However, I must see her, in order to detain and console her. See her! To what do I expose myself! Her touching graces, her sorrow, her love, her tears which I bid flow, and which it would be so sweet to dry up, those sighs which a simple and artless heart suffers to escape, that language of nature, in which the most sensitive soul paints itself with so much candour: what trials to support? What will become of me? And what can I say to her? No matter: I must see her, and talk to her, as a friend and a father. After seeing her, I only shall be the more uneasy, the more unhappy for it; but it is not my own peace that is in question; it is hers; and above all, the happiness of a friend depends on it, a friend for whom she must live. I am certain of subduing myself; and how painful soever the contest may be, it would be a weakness and shame to avoid it."

At Nelson's arrival, Coraly, trembling and confused, scarce dared present herself to him. She had wished his return with ardour, and, when she saw him, a mortal chill glided through her veins. She appeared, as it were, before a judge who was preparing, with one single word, to decide her fate.

What were Nelson's feelings, on seeing the roses of youth faded on her beautiful cheeks, and the fire of her eyes almost

extinguished! "Come," said Juliet to her brother, "appease the mind of this poor girl, and cure her of her melancholy. She is eaten up with the vapours in my company; she wants to return to India."

Nelson, speaking to her in a friendly manner, tried to induce her, by gentle reproaches, to explain herself before his sister; but Coraly kept silence; and Juliet, perceiving that she was a restraint upon her, went away.

"What is the matter with you, Coraly? What have we done to you?" said Nelson. "What sorrow oppresses you?"—"Do you not know it? Must you not have seen that my joy and my sorrow can no longer have more than one cause? Cruel friend, I live only through you; and you fly me: you would have me die! . . . But you would not have it so; they make you do it: they do more, they require of me to renounce you, and to forget you. They fright me, they damp my very soul, and they oblige you to drive me distracted. I ask of you but one favour," continued she, throwing herself at his knees, "it is to tell me whom I offend in loving you, what duty I betray, and what evil I occasion. Are there here laws so cruel, are there tyrants so rigorous, as to forbid me the most worthy use of my heart and my reason? Must we love nothing in the world? or, if I may love, can I make a better choice?"

"My dear Coraly," replied Nelson, "nothing is truer, nothing is more tender than the friendship which attaches me to you. It would be impossible, it would be even unjust that you should not be sensible of it."—"Ah! I revive: this is talking reason."—"But though it would be extremely agreeable to me to be what you hold dearest in the world, it is what I cannot claim, neither ought I even to consent to it."—"Alas! now I do not understand you."—"When my friend confided you to my care, he was dear to you?"—"He is so still."—"You would have thought yourself happy to be his?"—"I dare say."—"You loved nothing so much as him in the

world?"—"I did not know you."—"Blandford, your deliverer, the guardian of your innocence, in loving you has a right to be loved."—"His favours are always present to me; I cherish him as a second father."—"Very well, know that he resolved to unite you to himself by a tie still more sweet and sacred than that of his favours. He confided to me the half of himself, and at his return he aspires only to the happiness of being your husband."—"Ah!" said Coraly, comforted, "this then is the obstacle which separates us? Be easy, it is removed."—"How?"—"Never, never, I swear to you, will Coraly be the wife of Blandford."—"It must be so."—"Impossible; Blandford himself will confess it."—"What! He who received you from the hand of a dying father, and who himself has acted as a father to you!"—"Under that sacred title I revere Blandford; but let him not require more."—"Then you have resolved on his unhappiness?"—"I have resolved to deceive nobody. If I were given to Blandford, and Nelson demanded my life of me, I would lay down my life for Nelson; I should be perjured to Blandford."—"What say you?"—"What I will dare to tell Blandford himself. And why should I dissemble it? Does love depend on myself?"—"Ah, how guilty you make me!"—"You! In what? In being amiable in my eyes? Ah! Heaven disposes of us. Heaven has given to Nelson those graces, those virtues which charm me: Heaven has given to me this soul, which it has made expressly for Nelson. If they knew how full it is of him, how impossible that it should love anything but you, anything like you! . . . Let them never talk to me of living, if it be not for you that I live."—"This is what drives me to desperation. With what reproaches has not my friend a right to overwhelm me?"—"He! of what can he complain? What has he lost? What have you taken from him? I love Blandford as a tender father; I love Nelson as myself, and more than myself: these sentiments are not incompatible. If Blandford delivered me into your hands as a deposit which was his own, it is not you,

it is he that is unjust."—"Alas! it is I, who obliged you to reclaim from him that treasure of which I rob him: it would be his if it were not mine; and the keeper becomes the purloiner."—"No, my friend, be equitable; I was my own, I am yours. I alone could give myself away, and have given myself to you. By attributing to friendship rights which it has not, it is you that usurp them in its behalf, and you make yourself an accomplice of the violence which they do me."—"He, my friend! do you violence?"—"What signifies it to me whether he does it himself, or you do it for him? Am I treated the less like a slave? One single interest occupies and touches you; but if another than your friend wanted to retain me captive, far from subscribing to it, would not you make it your glory to set me free? It is then only for the sake of friendship that you betray nature! What do I say? Nature! And Love, Nelson—Love, has not that also its rights? Is there not some law among you in favour of feeling souls? Is it just and generous to overwhelm a fond girl, to drive her to despair, and to tear without pity a heart whose only crime is loving you?"

Sobs interrupted her voice; and Nelson, who saw her choked with them, had not even time to call his sister. He hastened to untie the ribands which bound her bosom: and then all the charms of youth in its flower were unveiled to the eyes of this passionate lover. The terror with which he was seized, rendered him at first insensible of them; but when the Indian resuming her spirits, and perceiving herself pressed in his arms, thrilled with love and transport, and when on opening her fine languishing eyes, she sought the eyes of Nelson; "Heavenly powers," said he, "support me! all my virtue abandons me. Live, my dear Coraly."—"Would you that I should live, Nelson? would you then that I love you?"—"No, I should be perjured to friendship, I should be unworthy to see the light; unworthy of seeing my friend again. Alas! he foretold me this, and I vouchsafed not to believe him. I have presumed too much on my own heart. Have

pity on it, Coraly, on that heart which you rend to pieces. Suffer me to fly you and to subdue myself."—"Ah! you would have my death," said she to him, falling senseless at his feet. Nelson, who thought he saw his love expiring, rushed to embrace her, and restraining himself suddenly at the sight of Juliet, "My sister," said he, "succour her: it is for me to die." And saying these words he withdrew.

"Where is he?" demanded Coraly, on opening her eyes. "What have I done to him? Why fly me? And you, Juliet, more cruel still, why recall me to life?" Her sorrow redoubled, when she learned that Nelson had just gone; but reflection gave her a little hope and courage. The concern and tenderness which Nelson had not been able to conceal, the terror with which she had seen him seized, the tender words which had escaped him, and the violence which he had to use in order to subdue himself and withdraw, all persuaded her that she was beloved. "If it be true," said she, "I am happy. Blandford will return, I will confess the whole to him; he is too just and too generous to wish to tyrannise over me." But this illusion was soon dispelled.

Nelson received in the country a letter from his friend, announcing his return. "I hope," said he, at the end of his letter, "to see myself, in three days, united to all that I love. Pardon, my friend, if I associate with thee in my heart the amiable and tender Coraly. My soul was long solely devoted to thee, now she partakes of it. I have confided to thee the sweetest of my wishes, and I have seen friendship applaud love. I make my happiness, both of one and the other; I make it by thinking that by thy cares, and those of thy sister, I shall see my dear pupil again, her mind ornamented with new acquirements, her soul enriched with new virtues, more amiable if possible and more disposed to love me. It will be the purest bliss to me to possess her as a benefit conferred by you."

"Read this letter," writ Nelson to his sister, "and make

Coraly read it. What a lesson for me! What a reproach to her!"

"It is over," said Coraly, after having read, "I shall never be Nelson's; but let him not ask me to be another's. The liberty of loving is a good which I am not able to renounce." This resolution supported her; and Nelson in his solitude was much more unhappy than she.

"By what fatality," said he, "is it, that what forms the charm of nature and the delight of all hearts, the happiness of being loved, forms my torment? What say I? Of being loved? That is nothing; but to be loved of what I love? To touch on happiness? To have only to deliver myself up to it? . . . Ah! all that I can do is to fly; inviolable and sacred friendship asks no more. In what a condition have I seen this poor girl! In what a condition did I abandon her! She may well say, that she is the slave of my duty. I sacrifice her as a victim, and I am generous at her expense. So there are virtues which wound nature; and to be honest, one is sometimes obliged to be unjust and cruel! Oh, my friend! mayest thou reap the fruit of the efforts which it costs me, enjoy the good which I resign to thee, and live happy from my misfortune. Yes, I wish that she may love thee; I wish it, Heaven is my witness: and the most sensible of all my pains is that of doubting the success of my wishes."

It was impossible for nature to maintain herself in a state so violent. Nelson, after long struggles, sought repose; alas! there was no more repose for him. His constancy was at last exhausted, and his discouraged soul fell into a mortal languor. The weakness of his reason, the inefficacy of his virtue, the image of a painful and sorrowful life, the void and the state of annihilation, into which his soul would fall, if it ceased to love Coraly, the evils without intermission, which he must suffer if he continued to love her, and, above all, the terrifying idea of seeing, of envying, of hating, perhaps, a rival in his faithful friend, all rendered his life a torment to him, all urged him to

shorten the course of it.—Motives more strong restrained him. It was not a part of Nelson's principles that a man, a citizen, might dispose of himself. He made it a law to himself to live, consoled in his misery if he could still be useful to the world, but consumed with heaviness and sorrow, and become as it were insensible to everything.

The time appointed for Blandford's return approached. It was necessary that everything should be so disposed as to conceal from him the mischief which his absence had occasioned: and who should determine Coraly to conceal it, but Nelson? He returned therefore to London: but languishing, dejected, to such a degree as not to be recognisable. The sight of him overwhelmed Juliet with grief, and what impression did it not make on the soul of Coraly! Nelson took upon him to reassure them; but that very effort only served to complete his own dejection. The slow fever which consumed him redoubled; he was forced to give way to it; and this furnished occasion for a new contest between his sister and the young Indian. The latter would not quit Nelson's pillow. She urgently entreated them to accept of her care and attendance. They kept her out of the way from pity to herself, and for the sake of sparing him; but she tasted not the repose which they meant to procure her. Every moment of the night they found her wandering round the apartment of the patient, or motionless on the threshold of his door, with tears in her eyes, her soul on her lips, her ear attentive to the slightest noises, every one of which froze her with fear.

Nelson perceived that his sister suffered her to see him with regret. "Afflict her not," said he to her; "it is to no purpose: severity is no longer necessary. It is by gentleness and patience that we must attempt our cure."—"Coraly, my good friend," said he to her one day when they were alone with Juliet, "you would readily give something to restore my health, would not you?"—"O heavens! I would give my life." —"You can cure me at least. Our prejudices are, perhaps,

unjust, and our principles inhuman; but a man of honour is a slave to them. I have been Blandford's friend from my infancy. He relies on me as on himself, and the chagrin of taking from him a heart of which he has made me the keeper, is every day digging my grave. You may see whether I exaggerate. I do not conceal from you the source of the slow poison which consumes me. You alone can dry it up. I do not insist on it: you shall be still free; but there is no other remedy for my disease. Blandford is coming. If he perceive your disinclination for him, if you refuse him that hand which but for me would have been granted him, be assured that I shall not survive his misfortune and my own remorse. Our embraces will be our adieus. Consult yourself, my dear child, and if you would that I live, reconcile me with myself, justify me towards my friend."—"Ah! live, and do with me as you like," said Coraly to him, forgetting herself; and these words, distressing to love, bore joy to the bosom of friendship.

"But," resumed the Indian after a long silence, "how can I give myself to him whom I do not love, with a heart full of him whom I do love?"—"My dear, in a noble soul, duty triumphs over everything. When you have lost the hope of being mine, you will soon lose the thought. It will give you some pain no doubt, but my life depends on it, and you will have the consolation of having saved it."—"That is everything to me: I give myself up at that price. Sacrifice your victim; it will groan, but it will obey. But you, Nelson, you, who are truth itself, would you have me disguise my inclinations, and impose thus on your friend? Would you instruct me in the art of dissembling?"—"No, Coraly, dissimulation is useless. I have not been so unhappy as to extinguish in you gratitude, esteem, and tender friendship; these sentiments are due to your benefactor, and they are sufficient for your husband: only display these towards him. As to that inclination which leans not towards him, you owe him the sacrifice of it, but not the

confession.—That which would hurt, if it were known, ought to remain for ever concealed; and dangerous truth has silence for its refuge."

Juliet interrupted this scene, too painful to both; she took Coraly away, and she employed every endearment and commendation to console her. "It is thus," said the young Indian, with a smile of sorrow, "that on the Ganges they flatter the grief of a widow, who is about to devote herself to the flames of her husband's funeral pile. They adorn her, they crown her with flowers, they stupefy her with songs of praise. Alas! her sacrifice is soon finished: mine will be cruel and lasting. My good friend, I am not eighteen years of age! What tears have I yet to shed till the moment when my eyes shall shut for ever!" This melancholy idea showed Juliet a soul absorbed in sorrow. She employed herself no longer in consoling her, but in grieving along with her. Complaisance, persuasion, indulgent and feeling compassion, all the most delicate arts of friendship were put in practice to no effect.

At last, she was told that Blandford had landed; and Nelson, enfeebled and faint as he was, went to receive and embrace him at the harbour. Blandford, when he saw him, could not conceal his astonishment and his uneasiness. "Courage, man," said Nelson: "I have been very ill: but my health is returning. I see you again, and joy is a balm which will soon revive me. I am not the only one whose health has suffered by your absence. Your pupil is a little changed: the air of our climate may contribute to it. For the rest, she has made great progress: her understanding, her talents have unfolded themselves, and when the kind of languor into which she is fallen vanishes, you will possess what is pretty uncommon, a woman, in whom nature has left nothing wanting."

Blandford, therefore, was not surprised to find Coraly weak and languishing; but he was much affected at it. "It seems," said he, "as if Heaven wished to moderate my joy, and to punish me for the impatience which my duty excited in me at

a distance from you. I am now here again free and restored to love and friendship." The word *love* made Coraly tremble: Blandford perceived her concern. "My friend," said he to her, "ought to have prepared you for the confession which you have just heard."—"Yes, your goodness is well known to me: but can I approve the excess of it?"—"That is a language which smacks of European politeness: please forget it with me. Frank and tender Coraly, I have seen the time when if I had said, Shall Hymen unite us? you would have answered me without disguise, 'With all my heart,' or possibly, 'I cannot consent to it;' use the same freedom now.—I love you, Coraly, but I love to make you happy: your misfortune would be mine." Nelson, trembling, looked at Coraly, and durst not guess her answer. "I hesitate," said she to Blandford, "through a fear like yours.—While I saw you only as a friend, a second father, I said to myself, he will be content with my veneration and affectionate regard; but if the name of husband be added to titles already sacred, what have you not a right to expect? Can I pay my debts to you?"—"Ah! this amiable modesty is worthy of adorning you. Yes, you half of myself, your duties are fulfilled, if you return my affection. Your image has followed me everywhere. My soul flew back towards you across the depths which separated us: I have taught the name of Coraly to the echoes of another world. —Madam," said he to Juliet, "pardon me, if I envy you the happiness of possessing her. It will soon be my turn to watch over a health which is so precious to me. I will leave you the care of Nelson's: it is a charge not less dear to me. Let us live happy, my friends: it is you who have made me know the value of life; and, in exposing it, I have often experienced by what strong ties I was attached to you."

It was settled, that in less than a week Coraly should be married to Blandford. In the meantime, she remained with Juliet, and Nelson never quitted her. But his courage was exhausted in supporting the young Indian's. To be perpetually

constrained to suppress his own tears, to dry up those of a fond girl, who, sometimes distressed at his feet, sometimes fainting and falling into his arms, conjured him to have pity on her, without allowing one moment to his own weakness, and without ceasing to recall to his mind his cruel resolution, was a trial seemingly above the strength of nature: accordingly Nelson's virtue abandoned him every moment. "Leave me," said he to her, "unhappy girl! I am not a tiger; I have a feeling soul, and you distract it. Dispose of yourself, dispose of my life; but let me die faithful to my friend."—"And can I, at the hazard of your life, use my own will? Ah! Nelson, at least promise me to live; no longer for me, but for a sister who adores you."—"I should deceive you, Coraly. Not that I would make any attempt upon myself; but see the condition to which my grief has reduced me; see the effect of my remorse and my coming shame; shall I be less odious, less inexorable to myself, when the crime shall be accomplished?"—"Alas! you talk of a crime! Is it not one to tyrannise over me?"—"You are free; I no longer require anything; I know not even what are your duties; but I know too well my own, and I will not betray them."

It was thus that their private conversation served only to distress them. But Blandford's presence was still more painful. He came every day to converse with them, not on the barren topics of love, but on the care he took, that everything in his house should breathe cheerfulness and ease, that everything there should forestall the desires of his wife, and contribute to her happiness. "If I die, without children," said he, "the half of my wealth is hers, the other half is his who, after me, shall know how to please and to console her for having lost me. That, Nelson, is your place; there is no growing old in my profession: take my place when I shall be no more. Mine is not the odious pride of requiring my wife to continue faithful to my shade. Coraly is formed to embellish the world, and to enrich nature with the fruits of her fecundity."

It is more easy to conceive than to describe the situation of our two lovers. Their concern and confusion were the same in both; but it was a kind of consolation to Nelson, to see Coraly in such worthy hands, whereas Blandford's benefits and his love were an additional torment to her. On losing Nelson, she would have preferred the desertion of all nature to the cares, the favours, the love of all the world beside. It was decided, however, even with the consent of this unfortunate girl, that there was no longer time to hesitate, and that it was necessary for her to submit to her fate.

So she was led as a victim to that house, which she had cherished as her first asylum, but which she now dreaded as her grave.—Blandford received her there as its queen: and what she could not conceal of the violent state of her soul he attributed to timidity, to the concern which, at her age, the approach of marriage inspires.

Nelson had summoned up all the strength of a stoical soul, in order to present himself at this festival with a serene countenance.

They read the settlement which Blandford had made. It was from one end to the other a monument of love, esteem, and beneficence. Tears flowed from every eye, even from Coraly's.

Blandford approached respectfully, and stretching out his hand to her, "Come," said he, "my best-beloved, give to this pledge of your fidelity, to this title-deed of the happiness of my life, the inviolable sanctity with which it is to be clothed."

Coraly, doing herself the utmost violence, had scarce strength to advance, and put her hand to the pen. At the moment when she would have signed, her eyes were covered with a mist; her whole body was seized with a sudden trembling; her knees bent under her, and she was on the point of falling, if Blandford had not supported her. Shocked, frozen with fear, he looked at Nelson, and saw him with the

paleness of death on his countenance. Lady Albury had run up to Coraly, in order to assist her. "O Heaven," cries Blandford, "what is it that I see! Sorrow, death surround me. What was I about to do? What have you concealed from me? Ah! my friend, could it be possible! Return to life, my dear Coraly, I am not cruel, I am not unjust; I wish only for your happiness."

The women who surrounded Coraly, exerted themselves to revive her; and decency obliged Nelson and Blandford to keep at a distance. But Nelson remained immovable, with his eyes fixed on the ground, like a criminal. Blandford came up to him, and clasped him in his arms. "Am I no longer thy friend?" said he; "art thou not still the half of myself? Open thy heart to me, and tell me what has passed. . . . No, tell me nothing: I know all. This poor girl could not see thee, hear thee, and live with thee, without loving thee. She has sensibility, she has been touched with thy goodness, and thy virtues. Thou hast condemned her to silence, thou hast required of her the most grievous sacrifice. Ah, Nelson! had it been accomplished, what a misfortune! Just Heaven would not permit it; nature, to whom thou didst violence, has resumed her rights. Do not afflict thyself: it is a crime which she has spared thee. Yes, the devotion of Coraly was the crime of friendship."—"I confess it," replied Nelson, throwing himself at his knees: "I have been the innocent cause of thy unhappiness, of my own, and of that of this amiable girl; but I call fidelity, friendship, honour, to witness . . ."—"No oaths," interrupted Blandford: "they wrong us both. Go, my friend," continued he, raising him, "thou wouldest not be in my arms, if I had been able to suspect thee of a shameful perfidy. What I foresaw is come to pass, but without thy consent. What I have just now seen is a proof of it, and that very proof is unnecessary: thy friend has no need of it."—"It is certain," replied Nelson, "that I have nothing to reproach myself with, but my presumption and imprudence. But that

is enough, and I shall be punished for it. Coraly will not be thine, but I will not be hers."—"Is it thus that you answer a



"This poor girl could not see thee, hear thee, and live with thee, without loving thee."

generous friend?" replied Blandford to him in a firm and grave tone of voice. "Do you think yourself obliged to

observe childish punctilios with me? Coraly shall not be mine, because she would not be happy with me. But you have lost her, as a husband, a man of honour, whom but for you she would have loved, and this loss you must repair. The contract is drawn up, they shall change the names; but I insist that the articles remain. What I meant to give Coraly as a husband, I now give her as a father. Nelson, make me not blush by a humiliating refusal."—"I am confounded, and not surprised," said Nelson, "at this overwhelming generosity. I must subscribe to it with confusion, and revere it in silence. If I knew not how well respect reconciles itself to friendship, I should no longer dare to call you my friend."

During this conversation Coraly had recovered, and again saw with terror the light which was restored to her. But what was her surprise, and the revolution which was suddenly wrought in her soul! "All is known, all is forgiven," said Nelson, embracing her; "fall at the feet of our benefactor: from his hand I receive yours." Coraly would have been profuse in her acknowledgments. "You are a child," said Blandford to her: "you should have told me everything. Let us talk no more of it; but let us never forget that there are trials of which virtue herself had better not run the risk."

Note to "FRIENDSHIP PUT TO THE TEST."—P. 350.

The curious coincidence by which Marmontel, just before "Nelson" was to become the most famous name in the history of the English navy, selected it for that one of his pair of friends who was *not* the naval one, will strike everybody. This, however, is a mere chance. It is really strange that, though pretty familiar with literary English, he should have made the slip of introducing the distinctions (see p. 358) of "thou" and "you," which, still idiomatic in French, have never existed to the same extent in English, while, except on the stage and in artificial discourses, "thou" had become obsolete generations before the date of the tale. In comparison with this, the slight blunder of once calling Lady Albury "Lady Juliet Albury," is, in a Frenchman, altogether venial.



I SHALL be told that there is no correcting natural disposition, and I agree to it; but among the thousand combined accidents which compose a character, what eye is sharp enough to distinguish the one indelible characteristic of nature? How many vices and irregularities are attributed to her, which she never occasioned? Such is, in man, the hatred of mankind: it is a factitious character; a part which we take up out of whim, and maintain through habit; but in acting which, the soul is under restraint, from which she struggles to be delivered. What happened to the Misanthrope, whom Molière has painted, is an instance of it; and we shall see how he was brought to himself again.

Alcestes, dissatisfied, as you know, with his mistress and his judges, detesting the city and court, and resolved to fly mankind, retired very far from Paris, into the Vosges, near Laval, on the banks of the Vologne. This river, whose shells contain pearls, is still more valuable, on account of the fertility which it communicates to its borders. The valley which it

waters, is a beautiful meadow. On one side arise smiling hills, interspersed with woods and hamlets; on the other extend vast level fields covered with corn. Thither Alcestes retired, to live forgotten by all nature. Free from cares and duties, wholly resigned to himself, and at length delivered from the hateful sight of the world, he praised Heaven for having broken all his bonds. A little study, much exercise, the less lively than placid pleasures of gently vegetating—in one word, a life of active peace—preserved him from the dulness of solitude; he desired, he regretted nothing.

One of the pleasures of his retreat was to behold around him the cultivated and fertile earth, nourishing a people who seemed to be happy. A Misanthrope, who is such from virtue, thinks that he hates men, only because he loves them. Alcestes felt an emotion mingled with joy, at the sight of his fellow-creatures, rich by the labour of their own hands. "These people," said he, "are very happy in being yet half savages: they would soon be corrupted if they were more civilised."

As he walked in the fields, he accosted a labourer, who was singing at the plough. "God preserve you, good man," said he to him: "you are very merry!"—"Not more than usual," replied the villager.—"I am very glad of it: it proves that you are content with your condition."—"And well I may." —"Are you married?"—"Yes, thank Heaven."—"Have you any children?"—"I had five; I have lost one; but that loss may be repaired."—"Is your wife young?"—"Twenty-five." —"Is she handsome?"—"She is so to me; but she is better than handsome, she is good."—"And you love her?"—"Love her! who would not love her?"—"She loves you too, of course?"—"Oh, as to that, most heartily, and as well as before marriage?"—"You loved one another then before marriage?" —"Should we have taken each other if we had not?"—"And your children, do they come on well?"—"Yes, famously. The eldest is but seven; he has more wit than his father already. And my two girls! they are charming. It would

be a very great pity if they should want husbands! The youngest boy is not yet weaned; but the little rogue will be a sturdy fellow. Would you believe it? He beats his sisters, when they come to kiss their mother. He is afraid that they are coming to take the breast from him."—"Then you are all quite happy?"—"Happy? I should think so! You should see our joy, when I return from work! You would think they had not seen me for a year: I know not which to listen to. My wife hangs upon my neck, my daughters jump into my arms, my eldest boy waits for his turn to come, even little Jacky himself rolls on his mother's bed, and stretches out his little hands to me; while I laugh and cry, and kiss them; for all this moves me."—"I believe you."—"You ought to feel it, for to be sure you are a father."—"I have not that happiness."—"So much the worse: there is no other joy."

"And how do you live?"—"Very well; upon excellent bread, good milk, and the fruits of our orchard. My wife, with a little bacon, makes cabbage soup which the king himself might eat. Then we have the eggs of our fowls; and on Sundays we regale ourselves, and drink a cup of wine."—"Yes, but when the year turns out bad?"—"We are prepared for it, and live comfortably on what we have saved in a good one."—"Ay, but the rigour of the weather, the cold, the rain, the heat that you have to bear?"—"We are accustomed to them; and if you knew what pleasure one has in coming out in the evening to breathe the fresh air, after a summer's day; or, in winter, in unnumbing one's hands at a fire of good brushwood, between one's wife and one's children! And then we sup heartily, and go to sleep; and do you think that we ever bestow a thought upon the bad weather? Sometimes my wife says to me: 'My good man, do you hear the wind and the storm? Ah, if you were now in the fields!' 'I am not there, I am with you,' I tell her; and to assure her of it, I press her to my bosom. Ah, sir, there are a great many gentry who do not live so happy as we."—"And the taxes?"—"We

pay them cheerfully: it must be so. All the country cannot be noble. Those who govern, and administer the laws, cannot labour with their hands. They supply our wants, we supply theirs; and every state of life, as they say, has its troubles." —"What equity!" said the Misanthrope. "There, now, in two words, is the whole economy of primitive society. O Nature! there is nothing just but thee: it is in thy uncultivated simplicity that we find sound reason. But if you pay taxes so well, do not you expose yourself to be rated more heavily?" —"We used to fear it formerly; but, thank God, the lord of the manor has freed us from that uneasiness. He performs the duty of our good king: he assesses, he receives himself, and in cases of necessity he makes advances. He takes care of us, as if we were his children."—"And who is this fine fellow?"—"The Viscount de Laval. He is well enough known: the whole country respects him."—"Does he reside in his castle?"—"He passes eight months of the year there." —"And the rest?"—"At Paris, I believe."—"Does he see company?"—"The townsmen of Bruyères, and sometimes our old folks, who go to eat his soup, and to chat with him." —"And does he bring anybody from Paris?"—"Nobody but his daughter."—"He is quite right. And how does he employ himself?"—"In judging us, reconciling us, marrying our children, maintaining peace in our families, and assisting them when the seasons are bad."—"I will go," said Alcestes, "and see his village: it must be interesting."

He was surprised to find the roads, even the cross-roads, bordered with hedges, and kept with care; but when he met people busied in keeping them level, "Ah," said he, "there are the statute-labourers."—"Statute-labourers?" replied an old man, who presided over these works, "we know none such here: these people are paid: nobody is forced to work. Only, if there come to the village a vagabond, an idle fellow, I am sent to him; and if he wants bread, he earns it, or he goes to seek it elsewhere."—"And who has established this happy

regulation?"—"Our good lord, the father of us all."—"And who provides the funds for this expense?"—"The community; and as it assesses itself, it comes not to pass, as is seen elsewhere, that the rich are exempted at the charge of the poor."

Alcestes redoubled his esteem for the wise and beneficent man who governed this little people. "How powerful would a king be," said he, "and a state how happy, if all great landlords would follow the example of this one! But Paris absorbs both goods and men: it strips, it invades everything."

His first glance at the village showed him the image of ease and health. He entered a plain and large building, which was in appearance a public edifice, and there he found a multitude of children, women, and old men, employed in useful labours. Idleness was not permitted, excepting to the last weakness. Infancy, almost when it left the cradle, acquired the habit and relish of labour, and old age, at the brink of the grave, still exercised its trembling hands. The season in which the earth rests, assembled in the workshop the able-bodied men, and then the shuttle, the saw, and the hatchet gave a new value to the productions of nature. "I am not surprised," said Alcestes, "that these people should be exempt from vice and want. They are laborious and perpetually employed." He inquired how the workshop had been established. "Our good lord," said they to him, "advanced the money. It was but a small matter at first, and all was done at his risk, at his expense, and for his profit; but after being well assured that it was profitable, he gave up the undertaking to us: he interferes no longer, except in protecting it; and every year he gives to the village the tools of some one of our arts: it is the present he makes at the first wedding that is celebrated in the year."—"I must see this man," said Alcestes; "his character pleases me."

He advanced into the village, and he observed a house where there was some disturbance. He asked the cause of this commotion; they told him that the head of the family

was at the point of death. He entered, and saw an old man, who, with an expiring, but serene eye, seemed bidding adieu to his children, who melted into tears around him. He distinguished, in the midst of the crowd, a person moved, but less afflicted, who encouraged and consoled them. By his plain and grave dress, he took him for the village doctor. "Sir," said he to him, "be not surprised at seeing a stranger here. It is not idle curiosity that brings me hither. These good people may have need of assistance at so melancholy a juncture; and I have come . . ."—"Sir," said the Viscount to him, "my peasants are obliged to you; I hope, as long as I live, they will have need of nobody; and if money could prolong the days of a good man, this worthy father of a family should be restored to his children."—"Ah, sir," said Alcestes, on discovering Monsieur de Laval by this talk, "pardon an uneasiness which I ought not to have felt."—"I am not offended," replied M. de Laval, "at having a competitor in a good deed; but may I know who you are, and what brings you here?" At the name of Alcestes he recollected that censor of human nature whose rigour was so well known; but, without being intimidated, "Sir," said he, "I am very glad to have you in my neighbourhood, and if I can be of service to you in anything, I beg you to command me."

Alcestes went to visit M. de Laval, and was received by him with that plain and sincere politeness which proclaims neither the need, nor the desire of forming new acquaintances. —"Here," said he, "is a man of some reserve, I like him the better for it." He congratulated M. de Laval on the pleasures of his solitude. "You come to live here," said he, "far from mankind, and you are quite right to fly from them!"—"I, sir? I do not fly from mankind. I have neither the weakness to fear them, the pride to despise them, nor the misfortune to hate them." This answer came so home, that Alcestes was disconcerted at it. But he determined to stick to his point, and he began to satirise the world. "I have lived in the

world, as well as others," said M. de Laval, "and I have not found it so wicked. There are vices and virtues, good and evil, in it, I confess; but nature is so compounded, we must know how to accommodate ourselves to it."—"Ay, but," said Alcestes, "in this compound the good is so very small, and the evil so predominant, that the latter chokes the former."—"Ah, sir," replied the Viscount, "if we were as strongly fired with the good as with the evil, if we used the same warmth in publishing it, and if good examples were posted up as bad ones are, can you doubt but that the good ones would carry it on the balance? But gratitude speaks so low, and complaint declaims so loud, that we only hear the latter. Esteem and friendship are commonly moderate in their commendations: they imitate the modesty of the virtuous in praising them; whereas, resentment and injury exaggerate everything to excess. Thus we see not the good, but through a medium which lessens it, and we view the evil through a vapour which magnifies it."

"Sir," said Alcestes to the Viscount, "you make me fain to think like you; and though I might have on my side the melancholy truth, your mistake would be preferable."—"Assuredly: fretfulness is of no service. 'Tis a fine part for a man to play, to be cross like a child, and get into a corner, to pout at all the world; and why? For the bickerings of the circle in which we live: as if all nature were an accomplice, and responsible for the injuries by which we are hurt!"—"You are right," said Alcestes: "it would be unjust to make men responsible as a whole; but how many grievances have we not to reproach them with in common? Believe me, sir, my prejudice has serious and weighty motives. You will do me justice, when you know me. Permit me to see you often."—"Often? that is difficult," said the Viscount; "my time is very much taken up; and my daughter and I have our studies, which leave us little leisure; but sometimes, if you please, we will enjoy our neighbourship at our ease, and without laying

any constraint on each other: for the privilege of the country is to have it in our power to be alone when we have a mind."

"This man is rare in his species," said Alcestes as he went away. "And his daughter, who listened to us with the air of so tender a veneration for her father; his daughter, brought up under his eyes, accustomed to a plain life, pure manners, and pleasures that are innocent, will make an estimable wife, or I am very much mistaken; at least," continued he, "unless they lead her astray in that Paris, where everything is ruined."

If we represent to ourselves delicacy and feeling personified, we shall have an idea of Ursula's beauty. (It was thus that Mademoiselle de Laval was called.) Her figure was such as imagination gives to the youngest of the Graces. She was just eighteen, and by the freshness and regularity of her charms, you might see that nature had just put the last touch to her.—When unmoved, the lilies of her complexion prevailed over the roses; but at the slightest emotion of her soul, the roses effaced the lilies. Not content with having the colouring of flowers, her skin had also their delicacy, and that down so soft, so velvet-like, which nothing has yet tarnished. But it was in the features of Ursula's countenance that a thousand charms varied perpetually, displayed themselves successively. In her eyes, sometimes a modest languor, a timid sensibility seemed to issue from her soul, and to express itself by her looks; sometimes a noble severity, commanding in its sweetness, moderated their touching lustre; and one saw there reigning by turns severe decency, fearful modesty, and lively and tender voluptuousness. Her voice and mouth were of that kind which embellishes everything; her lips could not move without discovering new attractions; and when she condescended to smile, her very silence was intelligent. Nothing could be more simple than her attire, and nothing more elegant. In the country, she allowed her hair, which was pale gold of the softest tint, to grow, and ringlets, which art could not hold captive, floated around her ivory neck, and

waved down upon her beautiful bosom. The Misanthrope found in her an air of the best breeding, and manners of perfect propriety. "It would be a pity," said he, "that she should fall into bad hands: there is the making of a perfect wife in her. Indeed, the more I think of it the more I congratulate myself in having her father for a neighbour; he is an upright man, a fine fellow: I do not believe that he has a very sound way of thinking; but he has an excellent heart."

Some days after, M. de Laval, in his walks abroad, returned the visit; and Alcestes talked to him of the pleasure which he must have in making people happy. "It is a fine example," added he, "and to the shame of mankind a pretty rare one! How many folks, richer and more powerful than you, are only a burthen to the people!"—"I neither excuse them, nor blame all of them," replied M. de Laval. "To do good, there must be the power; and when we have that, we ought to know how to set about it. But think not that it is so easy to effect it. It is not sufficient to be dexterous enough; we must be also lucky enough; we must have just, sensible, docile minds to deal with, and a great deal of address and patience is often necessary to lead on the people, who are naturally diffident and fearful, to what is advantageous to them."—"Truly," said Alcestes, "it is the usual excuse: but do you think it a very solid one? And cannot they also conquer the obstacles you have overcome?"—"I have been," said M. de Laval, "solicited by opportunity, and seconded by circumstances. These people, newly conquered, thought themselves undone beyond redemption, and the moment I held my arms open to them, their despair made them rush thereinto. At the mercy of an arbitrary taxation, they had conceived so much terror, that they chose rather to suffer molestation than to show a little comfort. The expenses of the levy aggravated the impost; it was more than these good people could bear; and utter poverty was the asylum into which discouragement had thrown them. On my arrival here I found established

this maxim, distressing in itself and destructive to the country: *The more we labour the more we shall be trampled upon.* The men durst not be laborious, the women trembled at becoming fruitful. I went back to the source of the evil. I addressed myself to the man appointed to collect the tribute. 'Sir,' said I to him, 'my vassals groan under the burthens of distraint: I wish to hear no more of it. Let us see what they owe yet of the year's impost; I have come to pay it up.'—'Sir,' replied the receiver to me, 'that cannot be.'—'Why so?' said I.—'It is not the rule.'—'What! is it not the rule to pay the king the tribute which he demands? to pay it him with the least expense possible, and with the least delay?'—'Yes,' said he, 'that is the king's interest; but it is not mine. What would become of me, if it were to be paid down? The expenses are the perquisites of my office.' To so good a reason, I had no reply; and without insisting farther, I went to see the intendant. 'I beg two favours of you,' said I to him: 'one, that I may be permitted, every year, to pay the tribute for my vassals; the other, that their rate-book may not vary except with the variations of the public tax.' I obtained what I asked.

"'Friends,' said I to my peasants, whom I assembled at my arrival, 'I now give you notice, that it is in my hands you are to deposit for the future the just tribute which you owe to the king. No more vexatious proceedings, no more expenses. Every Sunday, your wives shall bring their savings to my pew in church, and you will be cleared by degrees. Labour, cultivate your holdings, increase their value to a hundredfold; may the ground enrich you; you shall not be charged the more for it: I, your father, will be answerable to you for that. Those who shall be deficient, I will assist; and a few days of the dead season of the year, employed in work for me, will reimburse me what I advance.'

"This plan was approved, and we have followed it. Our housewives never fail to bring me their little offering. When

I receive it, I encourage them, I tell them of our good king; they go away with tears in their eyes: thus I have made an act of love out of what they looked upon, before my time, as an act of servitude.

"The statute-work came next, and the intendant, who detested it, but knew not how to remedy it, was enchanted at the method which I had taken to exempt my village therefrom.

"Lastly, as there was a great deal of superfluous time, and many useless hands, I established the workshop, which you may have seen. It is the property of the community; they administer it under my eyes: every one works there; but labour is not sufficiently paid to divert them from working in the fields. The husbandman employs in it only the time which would otherwise be lost. The profit which they draw from it, forms a fund which is employed in contributing to the militia, and to the expenses of public works. But an advantage, more precious still, which comes from this establishment, is the increase of the human race. When children are a burden, men beget no more than they are able to maintain; but from the moment when, as they leave the cradle, they are able to provide for their own subsistence, nature does what attracts her without reserve or uneasiness. The means of population are discussed; there is but one: to provide subsistence and employment for mankind. As they are born only to live, we must ensure them a livelihood at their birth."

"Nothing is wiser than your principles, nothing more virtuous than your cares: but confess," replied the Misanthrope, "that this form of doing good, important as it is, is not so difficult as to discourage those who love it: and that if there were men like you . . ."—"Say, rather, if they were so situated. I have had circumstances in my favour, and everything depends upon that. We see what is right: we love it; we wish to effect it; but obstacles arise at every step we take. There needs but one to prevent it; and instead of one, there

arise a thousand. I was here very much at my ease: not a man of credit had an interest in the evil which I meant to destroy; and how little would have been sufficient to prevent my being able to remedy it! Suppose, instead of a tractable intendant, I had been under the necessity of seeing, persuading, prevailing on a self-willed man, jealous of his power, entirely led by his own opinions, or swayed by the counsels of his subaltern officers.—Nothing of all this scheme could have taken place: they would have told me not to interfere, but to let things of this kind alone. Thus it is that good-will on the part of the rich often remains useless. I know that you are little disposed to believe it; but there is more peevishness in your prejudices than you imagine."

Alcestes, touched to the quick by this reproach, from a man whose esteem he valued so much, endeavoured to justify himself. He told him of the lawsuit he had lost, of the coquette who had deceived him, and of all his subjects of complaint against human nature.

"Truly," said the Viscount to him, "this was a mighty matter to make one uneasy! You go and choose among a thousand women a giddy creature, who naturally amuses herself, and makes a fool of you; you take most seriously that love of which she makes a mere diversion; which is to blame? But granting her wrong, are all women like her? What! because there are knaves among men, are you and I any the less men of honour for that? In the individual who hurts you, you hate the species! There is peevishness, neighbour, there is peevishness in this, you must admit.

"You have lost a cause which you thought just; but does not a suitor, who is a person of integrity, always think that he has a good cause? Are you alone more disinterested, more infallible than your judges? And if they made a mistake, are they criminal for that? I, sir, when I see men devote themselves to a state of life which has many troubles in it, and very few pleasures, which imposes on their manners all the

constraint of the most severe decorum, which requires unremitting application, thoughts collected without relief, where industry brings no additional gain, where virtue herself is almost without lustre; when I see them amidst the luxury and pleasures of an opulent city, living retired, solitary, in the frugality, simplicity, and modesty of the first ages, I consider insults to their fairness as a sacrilege. Now, such is the life of the greater part of the judges whom you accuse upon such slight foundations. It is not a few giddy persons whom you see fluttering in the world, that hold the balance of the laws.—Till such time as they become more prudent, they have at least the modesty to be silent before men of approved wisdom. The latter are sometimes mistaken, without doubt, because they are not angels; but they are less of men than you and I; and I will never be persuaded, that a venerable old man, who at the break of day drags himself to court with a tottering pace, goes there to commit injustice. Such a strange compound would be a monster: it does not exist.

"With regard to the Court, there are in it so many complicated and powerful interests, which thwart and oppose each other, that it is natural that men should be more delivered up to their passions, and more spiteful there than elsewhere. But neither you nor I have passed through these great trials of ambition and envy; and it has depended, perhaps, on but a trifle that we have not been, as well as others, false friends and base flatterers. Believe me, sir, few people have a right to act as the *police* of the world."

"All honest folk have that right," said Alcestes; "and if they would league themselves together, bad men would not have so much audacity and credit in the world."—"When that league is formed," said M. de Laval, as he took his leave, "we will both enroll ourselves in it. Till then, neighbour, I advise you to do quietly, in your little corner, the utmost good you can, by taking for your rule the love of mankind, and reserving your hatred for a few sad exceptions."

"It is a very great pity," said Alcestes, when M. de Laval was gone, "that goodness should be always accompanied with weakness, while wickedness has so much strength and vigour!" —"It is a very great pity," said M. de Laval, "that this excellent man has taken a bias, which renders him useless to himself and others! He has uprightness, he loves virtue; but virtue is but a chimera without the love of humanity." Thus both, as they judged each other, were ill-satisfied.

A rather curious incident put Alcestes still less at his ease with M. de Laval. The Baron of Blonzac, a right Gascon, a man of condition, but pretentious, and a Misanthrope in his own way, had married a Canoness of Remiremont, a relation of the Viscount. He was quartered in Lorraine. He came to see M. de Laval; and whether it was to amuse himself, or to correct two Misanthropes by means of each other, M. de Laval chose to set them by the ears. He sent to invite Alcestes to dinner.

Among men, table-talk turns pretty often upon politics; and no sooner was the soup on table than the Gascon began railing at Government, and drinking to match. "I make no point of concealing it," said he; "I have taken an aversion to the world. I would be two thousand leagues out of my own country, and two thousand years removed from my own age. It is the country of intriguers of both sexes; it is the age of favouritism. Intrigue and favour have shared things between them, and have forgot nothing but merit. He that pays his court obtains everything, and he that does his duty has nothing. Myself, for example, who only understand how to march where honour calls, and to fight as becomes a soldier, I am known by the enemy; but may the devil take me if either the ministry or the court knows that I exist. If they were to hear any mention of me, they would take me for one of my grandfathers; and if they should be told that a cannon-ball had taken off my head, I will lay a wager they would ask, if there were any more Blonzacs?"—"Why do not you show yourself?"

said M. de Laval to him. "There is no necessity to let oneself be forgot."—"Why, my lord, I show myself in the day of battle. Is it at Paris that the colours are flying?"

In the midst of this talk, letters were brought to M. de Laval from Paris. He asked leave to read them, "in order to know," said he, "if there be any news," and one of his letters informed him, that the command of a citadel, which he had been soliciting for M. de Blonzac, without his knowledge, had just been granted him. "Hold," said he to him, "here is something that concerns you." Blonzac read, leaped with joy, and ran to embrace the Viscount; but after the sally he had made, he durst not mention what had happened to him. Alcestes, believing he had found in him a second, did not fail in urging him on. "Well," said he, "this is an example of those acts of injustice which shock me: a man of birth, a good soldier, after having served the state, remains forgotten, unrewarded; and then let them tell me that all goes well."—"Why," replied Blonzac, "we must be just: everything goes not so ill as is said. Rewards keep one waiting a little; but they come in time. It is not the fault of the ministry, if more services are performed than there are rewards to be bestowed; and, in fact, they do what they can."

Alcestes was a little surprised at this change of language, and the apologetic tone which Blonzac assumed, during the rest of the entertainment. "Come," said the Viscount, "in order to reconcile you, let us drink the Commandant's health;" and he made public what he had just learnt. "I ask the gentleman's pardon," said Alcestes, "for having dwelt on his complaints: I did not know the reasons which he had to retract them."—"I!" said Blonzac, "I have no animosity, and I come to like a child."—"You see," resumed M. de Laval, "that a Misanthrope is to be brought back to reason." —"Yes," replied Alcestes smartly, "when he regulates his sentiments on his own personal interest."—"Ah, sir," said Blonzac, "do you know any one who is warm for what touches

him neither nearly, nor at a distance?"—"Everything that concerns humanity," replied Alcestes, "touches a good man nearly; and doubt not but there are friends enough of order, to hate evil as evil, without any respect to themselves."—"I will believe it," replied the Gascon, "when I see any one uneasy at what passes in China; but so long as people are afflicted only at the hurt which they feel themselves, or which they may feel, I shall believe that they think only of themselves, while they have the air of being taken up with the thought of others. As for me, I am sincere: I never gave myself out as an advocate for the discontented. Let every one plead his own cause. I complained while I had reason to complain. I make my peace with the world, as soon as I have reason to be satisfied with it."

As much as the scene with Blonzac annoyed Alcestes, so much did it rejoice M. de Laval and his daughter. "There," said they, "our Misanthrope has received a good lesson."

Whether it was shame, or policy, he was some days without seeing them. He came again, however, one afternoon. The Viscount was gone to the village: Mademoiselle de Laval received him; and on finding himself alone with her, a transport seized him, which he had some difficulty to conceal.

"We have not had the honour of seeing you," said she to him, "since M. de Blonzac's visit; what say you to that gentleman?"—"Why, he is a man like the rest."—"Not so much like the rest: he speaks with an open heart, he says what others conceal; and that frankness makes him, in my opinion, a rather singular character."—"Yes, Mademoiselle, frankness is rare; and I am very glad to see that at your age you are convinced of it. You will often have occasion to recollect it, I promise you. Ah! into what a world you will shortly fall! My lord the Viscount excuses it in the best manner he is able; his own beautiful soul does the rest of mankind the honour to judge of them according to itself: but if you knew how dangerous and hateful the greater part are!"

—"You, for example," said Ursula, smiling, "you have very great reason to complain of it, have you not?"—"Spare me, I pray you, and attribute not to me the personalities of M. Blonzac. I think as he does in certain respects; but our motives are not the same."—"I believe you: but explain to me what I cannot understand. Vice and virtue, I have been told, are nothing more than relative terms. The one is vice, because it hurts mankind: the other virtue, on account of the good which it occasions."—"Exactly so."—"To hate vice, to love virtue, is therefore only to interest ourselves in the welfare of mankind, and in order so to interest ourselves, we must love them. For how can you at once interest yourself, and hate them?"—"I interest myself in the welfare of the good whom I love, and I detest the wicked who hurt them; but the good are very few in number, and the world is full of bad people."

"See there now. Your hatred at least extends not to all mankind. But do you think that those whom you love are everywhere so few in number? Let us travel together in fancy. Do you agree to it?"—"With all my heart."—"First, in the country, are you not persuaded that there are morals, and if not virtues, at least simplicity, goodness, innocence?" —"There is also commonly distrust and craft."—"Alas, I can easily conceive what my father has said more than once: craft and distrust are the consequence of weakness. We find them in villagers, as in women and children. They have everything to fear; they escape, they defend themselves as well as they can; and we observe the same instinct in most animals." —"Yes," said Alcestes, "and that very circumstance is a satire on the cruel and rapacious animals that they have to guard against."—"I understand you; but we are now speaking only of country people, and you will agree with me, that they are more worthy of pity than of hatred."—"Oh, I agree."—

"Let us pass to the cities, and take Paris for example."— "My God! what an example you choose."—"Very well, even

in that same Paris, the common people are good: my father goes about among them: he often visits those obscure recesses, where poor families are crowded together and groan in want; he says that he finds there modesty, patience, honesty, and sometimes even nobleness of thinking, which move and astonish him."—"And this it is which ought to set us against an unpitying world, which forsakes suffering virtue, and pays respect to successful and insolent vice."—"Not so fast: we are at the common people. Agree that, in general, they are kindly, docile, courteous, honest, and that their sincerity gives them a confidence which is very often abused."—"Oh, very often!"—"You love the common people then? And in all places the common people form the greater number."—"Not everywhere."—"We are speaking only of our own country: it is with this that I would reconcile you at present. Now let us come to the great world, and tell me, first, if my father has deceived me in describing the manners of the women."

"'As their duties,' says he, 'are hidden in the interior of a private life, their virtues have nothing prominent: it is only their vices that are conspicuous; and the folly of one woman makes more noise than the discretion of a thousand. Thus the evil rises in evidence, and the good remains buried.' My father adds, that one moment of weakness, one imprudence, ruins a woman, and that this blemish has sometimes tarnished a thousand excellent qualities. He confesses, in short, that the vice with which women are most reproached, and which does them the most injury, hurts only themselves, and that there is no reason for hating them.—For the rest, what is it you reproach us with? A little falsehood? But that is all a matter of mutual arrangement. Instructed from our infancy to endeavour to please you, we have no other care but to conceal what will not please you. If we disguise ourselves, it is only under those charms which you love better than our own. And do you know that nothing is more galling, nothing

more humiliating to us? I am young; but I can easily perceive, that the finest action of freedom, is to show ourselves such as we are; that to disguise one's soul, and to disavow one's self, is of all the acts of servitude the most degrading; and we must do the most painful violence to self-love to debase ourselves to dissimulation, and to a lie! This is where I find a woman a slave; and it is a yoke which has been imposed on us."

"If all women thought as nobly as you do, beautiful Ursula, they would not so lightly, and in gaiety of heart, make a mere pastime of deceiving us."—"If they deceive you, it is your own fault. You are our kings: convince us that you love nothing so much as truth, that truth alone pleases and touches you, and we will tell it you always. What is the ambition of a woman? To be lovely, and to be loved. Very well, write on the apple, *To the most sincere;* they will all dispute it with each other in unaffected simplicity. But you have written, *To the most seducing;* and each tries, who shall seduce you the best. As for our jealousies, our little animosities, our tattlings, our bickerings—all these things are only amusing to you; and you will agree that your wars are of very different consequence. Nothing remains then, but the frivolousness of our tastes and humours; but whenever you please, we shall be more solid: and, perhaps, there are many women who have seized, as it were by stealth, enlightenments and principles which custom grudges them."

"You are a proof of it," said Alcestes to her, "you whose soul is so much above your sex and your age."—"I am young," replied Ursula, "and I have a right to your indulgence; but the question is not concerning me—it concerns the world which you fly, which you abandon, without well knowing why. I have attempted the defence of women; I leave to my father the care of accomplishing that of men; but I tell you beforehand, that in giving me the picture of their society, he has often told me, that there were almost as few reprobate minds

as there are heroic souls, and that the majority is composed of weak, harmless people, who require nothing but peace and quiet."—"Yes, peace and quiet, every one for himself, and at the expense of the person to whom it belongs. The world, Mademoiselle, is composed only of dupes and knaves; now, nobody would be a dupe; and to speak only of what concerns yourself, I must tell you, that all the idle people there are at Paris of an age to please, are employed morning and evening in nothing else but in laying snares for women."—"Good!" said Ursula, "they know it; and my father is persuaded that this contest of gallantry on the one side, and coquetry on the other, is nothing but a game which both agree to play. Let who will be of the party: those who like not the sport, have only to keep themselves in their own corners; and nothing, he says, is in less danger than virtue, when it is real."—"You think so?"—"I am so thoroughly persuaded of it, that if ever I commit an indiscretion, I declare to you beforehand, it will be because I chose."—"Without doubt it is a matter of choice, but of choice under the spell of an enchanter, who makes you choose it."—"That also is an excuse which from this moment I renounce: I have no faith in enchantments."

They had got so far, when Monsieur de Laval arrived from his walk. "What say you, father, to Alcestes?" continued Ursula. "He would have me tremble at being exposed in the world to the seduction of men."—"Why," said her father, "we must not be too confident; I do not think you infallible." —"No, but you will be so for me; and if you lose sight of me, you know what you have promised me."—"I will endeavour to keep my word."—"May I be in the secret?" demanded Alcestes, with a timid air.—"There is no secret in it," replied Ursula. "My father has had the goodness to instruct me in my duties; and if he could guide me perpetually, I should be very sure of not going astray. If I forgot myself, he would not forget me; accustomed to read my soul, he would regulate all its motions; but as he will not always have his eyes upon

me, he has promised me another guide, a husband, to be his friend and mine, and to supply the place of a father."—"Add, also, and of a lover; for a young woman must have love. I would have you be discreet, but I would likewise have you be happy; and if I had the imprudence to give you a husband who did not love you, or knew not how to please you, I should no longer have the right of taking it ill, if the desire of enjoying the greatest of felicities, that of loving and being loved, should make you forget my lessons."

Alcestes went away, charmed with the wisdom of so good a father, and more still with the candour and honesty of the daughter. "A distinction has been made," said he, "between the age of innocence and that of reason, but, in her happy disposition, innocence and reason unite. Her soul purifies, at the same time that it enlightens itself. Ah! if there were a man worthy of cultivating gifts so precious, what a source of delicious enjoyments to him! there is nothing but the world filled with reefs, from which it is necessary to keep her at a distance. But if she loved, what would it be to her? A virtuous and tender husband would suffice her, would be to her instead of everything,—I dare believe, that at twenty-five, I was the man to suit her. . . . At twenty-five! and what did I know then? How to amuse myself, and to run into dissipation! Was I capable of filling the place of a wise and vigilant father? I should have loved her to distraction; but what confidence should I have inspired into her? Fifteen years more experience are perhaps still not too much. But from eighteen to forty, the interval must be frightful to her. There is no use thinking of it."

He thought of it, however, all night long; the next day he did nothing else; and the day following, the first idea which presented itself to him was that of his amiable Ursula. "Ah, what a pity," said he, "what a pity, if she were to take to the vices of the world! her soul is pure as her beauty.—What sweetness in her temper! what touching simplicity in her

manners and language! They talk of eloquence; is there any truer? It was impossible for her to convince me, but she persuaded me. I desired to think like her: I could have wished that the illusion, which she spread before me, were never dissipated. Why have I not over her, or rather over her father, that soft empire which she has over me! I would induce them to live here in the simplicity of nature. And what need should we have of the world? Ah! Three hearts, thoroughly united, two lovers and a father, have they not, in the intimacy of a mutual tenderness, enough to make them fully happy?"

In the evening, when he walked out, his steps turned, as it were of themselves, towards M. de Laval's gardens. He found him there with the pruning-knife in his hand, amidst his espaliers. "Confess," said he to him, "that these tranquil pleasures are well worth the noisy ones which people like, or think they like, at Paris."—"Everything has its season," replied the Viscount. "I love the country, while it is alive; I am useless at Paris, and my village has need of me; I enjoy there myself and the good which I do; my daughter is pleased and amused there; this is what attracts and retains me. But think not that I live there alone. Our little town of Bruyères is full of excellent folk, who love and cultivate letters. There is no part of the world, where the inhabitants have gentler manners. They are polite with frankness; plain, yet well-informed. Candour, uprightness, and gaiety, compose the character of those amiable people; they are social, humane, beneficent. Hospitality is a virtue which the father transmits to his son. The women are sprightly and virtuous; and society, embellished by them, unites the charms of decency to the pleasures of liberty. But in enjoying so sweet a commerce, I cease not still to love Paris; and if friendship, the love of letters, connections which I hold dear, did not recall me there, the attraction of variety alone would carry me back every year. The most lively pleasures languish at last, and the sweetest

become insipid to him, who knows not how to vary them." —"I can conceive, however," said the Misanthrope, "that a society, not numerous, intimately connected, having affluence, ease, and virtue, might be self-sufficing: and if an offer, agreeable to Mademoiselle de Laval, had no other inconvenience in it than that of fixing her in the country, I am persuaded that you yourself . . . "—"Why, truly," said M. de Laval, "if my daughter could be happy there, I should make her happiness mine: that is most certain. I have been living for myself these fifty years; it is high time now that I should live for her. But we are not come to that. My daughter loves Paris, and I am rich enough to settle her there decently."

This was enough for Alcestes; and fearing to discover himself, he turned the conversation to gardening, by asking M. de Laval if he did not cultivate flowers? "They pass away too soon," replied the Viscount. "The pleasure and regret they give meet too closely, and the idea of destruction intermingles something melancholy in the sentiment of enjoyment. In a word, I feel more chagrin in seeing a rose-bush stripped, than joy in seeing it flower. The culture of kitchen herbs has an interest more gradual, better kept up, and, to say the truth, more satisfactory; for it terminates in the useful. While art exercises and fatigues itself in varying the scenes of a flower garden, nature herself changes the decorations of the kitchen garden. How many metamorphoses, for example, have these peach trees experienced, from the very budding of their leaves to the full maturity of their fruits! Give me lasting pleasures, neighbour. Those which, like flowers, endure but a day, cost too much to renew."

Informed of the father's temper, Alcestes wanted to inform himself of that of the daughter, and it was easy for him to have a private conversation with her. "The more I penetrate," said he to her, "into your father's heart, the more I admire and love him."—"So much the better," said Ursula,

"his example will soften your manners; he will reconcile you to those like him."—"Like him! Ah, how few there are of them! It is a godsend to him, no doubt, to have a daughter like you, beautiful Ursula; but it is a happiness as rare to have a father like him. May the husband whom the Almighty destines you, be worthy both of one and the other!"—"Pray Heaven," said she, smiling, "that he be not a Misanthrope! Men of that cast are too difficult to correct."—"Would you prefer," said Alcestes, "one of those cold and trifling men, whom everything amuses and nothing interests; one of those weak and easy men, whom the mode bends, and fashions to its own taste, who are wax with respect to the manners of the time, and to whom custom is the supreme law? A Misanthrope loves but few; but when he loves, he loves truly."—"Yes, I perceive that such a conquest is flattering to vanity; but I am of a kindly temper, and not vain. I would fain not find asperity or moroseness in a heart devoted to me. I would wish to be able to communicate to it the softness of my own temper, and that sentiment of universal benevolence, which makes me see men and things on the most comfortable side. I could not spend my life in loving a man who would pass his in hatred."—"That is not very complimentary, for they accuse me of being a Misanthrope."—"Why, it is from you, and you alone, that I have taken the idea of that character: for M. de Blonzac's ill-temper was nothing but a fit of the pouts; and you have seen how small a matter could bring him to himself again. But a hatred of mankind, arising from reflection and founded on principles, is horrible; and this is what you profess. I am persuaded that your aversion from the world is nothing but a contradiction, an excess of virtue: you are not spiteful, you are only hard to please; and I believe you as little indulgent to yourself as to another; but this too severe and impatient probity renders you unsociable: and you must confess, that a husband of that temper would not be amusing!"

—"You would have a husband amuse you, then?"—"And amuse himself," replied she, "with the same things; for if marriage be a community of cares, it ought in return to be a community of pleasures."

"This is clear and plain enough," said Alcestes to himself, after their conversation: "she could not have told me her thoughts more plainly, though she had divined mine. It is, for me and those like me, a dismissal beforehand. And what am I thinking of? I am forty years old, free from incumbrances and disturbance; it depends on myself only to be happy. . . . Happy! And can I be so alone, with a soul so sensitive! I fly from men! Ah! it was women, handsome women, from whom I ought to have flown. I thought I knew them sufficiently to have no more to fear from them; but who could have expected what has happened to me? I must needs to my misfortune find, in an out-of-the-way province, beauty, youth, grace, wisdom, virtue herself, united in one and the same object. It seems as if love pursued me, and as if he had made this child on purpose to confound and distress me. And the way she takes to trouble my repose! I detest airs; nothing is more unaffected than she. I despise coquetry; she thinks not even of pleasing. I love, I adore candour; her soul shows itself quite naked: she tells me, to my face, the most cruel truths. What could she do more, if she had resolved to turn my brain? She is very young; she will change: launched into the world, which she loves, she will soon assume the manners of it: and it is believable that she will end by being a woman like the rest. . . . Believable! Ah! I do not believe it, and if I believed it, I should be too unjust. She will be the happiness and glory of her husband, if he be worthy of her. And I—I shall live alone, detached from everything, in a state of solitude and annihilation; for it must be confessed, the soul is annihilated as soon as it loves no longer. What am I saying? Alas! if I loved no longer, would this repose, this sleep of the soul, be frightful to me?

Flattering idea of greater happiness! it is thou, thou that makest me perceive my own vacuity and ennui. Ah! had I wished to cherish my solitude for ever, I should never have gone out of it."

These reflections, and these struggles, plunged him into a melancholy, which he thought it his duty to bury. When a week had passed, the Viscount, surprised at not seeing him again, sent to know if he was ill. Alcestes returned answer, that in fact he had not been well for some time past. The sympathetic soul of Ursula was affected at this answer. She had entertained, since his absence, some suspicion of the truth; she was now the more persuaded of it, and reproached herself for having afflicted him. "Let us go and see him," said the Viscount, "his condition moves my pity. Ah, daughter, what a gloomy and painful resolution is that of living alone, and of being sufficient to one's self! man is too weak to support it."

When Alcestes saw Mademoiselle de Laval enter his house, for the first time, it seemed as if his habitation had transformed itself into a temple. He was seized with joy and respect; but the impression of melancholy still made an alteration in his features. "What is the matter, Alcestes?" said M. de Laval. "I find you in trouble; and you seize that moment to avoid me. Do you think us of those people who do not love sorrowful countenances, and who must always be accosted with a laugh? When you are easy and happy, keep at home if you like: but when you have any grief, come to me, either for pity or consolation." Alcestes listened, and admired in silence. "Yes," said he, "I am struck with a thought which pursues and afflicts me: I would not, and I ought not to, conceal it from you. Heaven is my witness, that after having renounced the world, I regretted nothing at the time when I first knew you.—I have since perceived that I surrender myself to the pleasure of your company; that my soul is attached to you by all the ties of esteem and friendship: and that when

they must be broken, alas! perhaps for ever, this retreat, which I should have cherished, will be my grave. My resolution, therefore, is taken, not to wait till the charm of so pleasant a connection renders the solitude in which I am to live completely odious; and while I revere you, while I love both the one and the other, as two beings of whom nature must be proud, and of whom the world is not worthy, I beg you to permit me to bid you an eternal farewell." Then taking the Viscount's hands, and kissing them respectfully, he bathed them with his tears. "I shall see you no more, sir," added he, "but I shall hold you dear for ever."

"Nonsense," replied M. de Laval, "who hinders us from living together, if you like my acquaintance? You have taken an aversion to the world. You are wrong: but I make allowance for you: I know you have a good heart; and though our characters may not be the same, I see nothing incompatible in them; perhaps, they resemble each other more than you imagine. Why then take a resolution which afflicts you, and which would afflict me? you think with sorrow on the moment of our separation; it depends only on yourself to accompany us. Nothing is easier than to live at Paris, free, solitary, and detached from the world. My company is not noisy; it shall be yours; and I promise you, I will not force you to see any but such as you will esteem."—"I am deeply sensible of your goodness," said Alcestes, "and I know what I owe to such kindness."—"It is a very simple matter," replied the Viscount: "you suit me as you are: I esteem you, I pity you, and if I deliver you up to your own melancholy, you are a lost man. That would be a pity; and the condition which you are in, permits me not to abandon you. In a month, I shall leave the country; I have a place to give you; and whether on the score of friendship, or gratitude, I insist on your accepting it."—"Ah," said Alcestes, "that it were possible!"—"Is there," demanded the Viscount, "anything that stands in the way? If your fortune were out of order, I

flatter myself that you are not the man to blush at confessing it to me."—"No," said Alcestes; "I am richer than a bachelor



Then taking the Viscount's hands, and kissing them respectfully, he bathed them with his tears.

has need to be. I have ten thousand crowns a year, and owe nothing. But a more serious motive detains me here: you

shall judge of it."—"Come and sup with us then, and I will disperse all these clouds if I can."

"You make a hydra," said he to Alcestes on the road, "of the vice and wickedness you have seen in the world. Would you now try to what a small number this class of men, who terrify you, is reduced? Make out a list of them with me this evening; and I defy you to name a hundred persons, whom you have a right to hate."—"Heavens! I could name a thousand."—"We'll see. Remember only to be just, and to establish your complaints well."—"Nay, it is not on particular facts that I judge them: but by the gross of their manners. For example, it is pride which I condemn in some, meanness in others. I object to them, the abuse of riches, of credit, of authority, an exclusive self-love, a cruel insensibility to the misfortunes and wants of others; and although these life-long vices may not have features sufficiently marked to exclude a man formally from the number of decent people, they authorise me to banish him from the number of those whom I esteem and love."—"The instant that we talk in general," said the Viscount, "we can declaim as much as we please; but we run the risk of being unjust. Our esteem is a possession of which we are but the depositaries, and which appertains of right to him who deserves it: our contempt is a punishment, which it depends on us to inflict, but not according to our own caprice; and every one of us, in judging of his fellow, owes him the examination which he would require, if it were himself were to be judged. For, in regard to manners, public censure is a tribunal where we all sit, but to which we are also all cited; and who consents to be accused on vague presumptions, and to be condemned without proofs? Consult your own heart, and see in yourself whether you duly observe the first of all laws."

Alcestes walked with his eyes cast down, and sighed deeply. "You have in your mind," said the Viscount, "some deep wound, which I cannot probe. I only combat your

opinions, and it is, perhaps, to your feelings that I ought to apply the remedy."

As he spoke, they arrived at the castle of Laval; and whether through penetration, or delicacy, Ursula stole away, and left them together.

"Sir," said Alcestes to the Viscount, "I am now about to talk to you as to a friend of twenty years' standing: your kindness induces, and my duty obliges me to do so. It is but too true, that I must renounce what formed the consolation and the charm of my life, the pleasure of seeing you, and living with you. Another man would make use of circumlocution, and blush to break silence; but I see nothing in my misfortune that I need dissemble. I have not been able to behold with indifference, the most perfect work of nature. I confess it to Ursula's father, and I beseech him to forget it when he has allowed me to say farewell."—"What," said the Viscount, "is this the great secret? Very well, now we have it; you are in love: is there anything in that to make you unhappy? Ah, I would fain be so yet; and far from being ashamed, I should glory in it. Come, you must try to please, to be very tender, very complaisant: a man is still worth loving at your age; perhaps you will be beloved."—"Ah, sir, you do not understand me."—"Pardon me, I believe I do. You are in love with Ursula?"—"Alas, yes, sir."—"Very well, who hinders you from at least trying, whether her heart will be touched with the feelings of yours?"—"What, sir, do you authorise me! . . ."—"Why not? Sure you think me very hard to please! you have birth, and a handsome fortune, and if my daughter consents, I do not see how I can do better." Alcestes fell, in amaze, at the Viscount's knees. "Your goodness, sir, overpowers me," said he, "but it is of no service to me. Mademoiselle de Laval has declared to me, that a Misanthrope is her aversion: and this is the idea she has formed of my character."—"That does not signify: you will change." —"I cannot stoop to dissemble."—"You shall not; you shall

reconcile yourself to mankind, in good earnest. You will not be the first bear that has been tamed by women."

Supper being served, they seated themselves at table; and never before was M. de Laval in so sprightly an humour. "Come, neighbour," said he, "cheer up—nothing sets us off like spirits." Alcestes, thus encouraged, took heart. He extolled, in the most heartfelt fashion, the intimate commerce of souls, whom the relish of virtue, the love of truth, the sentiment of what is just and honest, unites. "What an attraction," said he, "have they for each other! With what effusion they communicate! What unison, what harmony they form in uniting! I find here but two that are like me; and they are a whole world to me. My soul is full; I could wish to be able to fix my existence in this delicious state, or that my life were a chain of incidents, resembling this."—"I would lay a wager," replied the Viscount, "that if Heaven were to take you at your word, you would be very sorry not to have asked more."—"I confess it, and if I were worthy to form yet one wish—" —"Did not I say so? Such is man. He has always somewhat to wish for. We are but three: and yet there is not one of us who does not wish for something: what say you, daughter? For my part, I confess I ask of Heaven, with ardour, a husband whom you may love, and who may render you happy."—"I ask also," said she, "a husband, who may assist me in making you happy."—"And you, Alcestes?"—"And I, if I durst, would ask to be that husband."—"Now here are three wishes," said M. de Laval, "which might easily be made one."

I have already given some intimation, that Ursula had conceived esteem and good-will for Alcestes: the trouble she had taken to soften his temper, proclaimed it; but it was only at this instant that she perceived how sensibly a disposition, which must excite either love or hate, had touched her.

"Hey!" said her father, after a long silence, "we are all three struck dumb! That Alcestes, at forty, should be confused

at having made a declaration to a lady of eighteen, is natural enough; that Ursula should blush, look down, and observe a modest silence, is quite natural too; but I, who am but



"Hey!" said her father, after a long silence, "we are all three struck dumb."

a mere confidant, why should I be grave? The scene is amusing."—"Father," said Ursula, "spare me, I beseech you. Alcestes gives me a mark of esteem, of which I am very

sensible: and he would be vexed if we made a jest of it."—"Would you have me believe that he is in earnest?"—"I am sure of it, and I am obliged to him."—"You do not mean it. At forty! A man of his character!"—"His character should estrange him from all sorts of engagements, and he knows very well what I think of it."—"And his age!"—"That is another thing; and I beg you to forget age, when you choose me a husband."—"Ah, child, but you are so young!"—"For that reason I have need of a husband who is not so."

"There is nothing then save this unlucky Misanthropy that you have to object to him; and I own that it is incompatible with your temper."—"And more still with the plan which I have formed for myself."—"And what is that plan?"—"The natural one: to live happily with my husband, to sacrifice my taste to him, if unluckily his is not mine, to renounce all society, rather than deprive myself of his, and not to take one step in the world without his counsel and consent. Consider, therefore, of what concern it is to me, that his wisdom should have nothing savage in it, and that he should be pleased with that world in which I hope to live with him."—"Whoever he be, Mademoiselle," replied Alcestes, "I dare answer, that he will be pleased wherever you are."—"My father," continued Ursula, "takes a pleasure in bringing together to his suppers, a circle of fashion, people both of the city and court; I would wish my husband to be of all these suppers, I would specially wish him to make himself agreeable."—"Animated with the desire of pleasing you, he will certainly do his best."—"I propose to myself to frequent the play, the public walks."—"Alas! these were my only pleasures, there are none more innocent."—"Balls too are my passion. And I would have my husband carry me there."—"In a mask, nothing is more easy."—"In a mask, or without a mask, just as I like."—"Right: that is a matter of indifference, as long as one is there with one's wife."—"Nay more, I would have him dance."—"Very well, Mademoiselle, I will dance," said Alcestes with

transport, throwing himself at her feet. — "Nay," cried the Viscount, "there is no resisting that; and since he consents to dance at a ball, he will do impossibilities for you."—"My lord thinks me ridiculous, and he has some reason, but I must play my part out. Yes, Mademoiselle, you see at your feet, a friend, a lover, and since you will have it so, a second father, — a man, in short, who renounces life, if he is not to live for you."

Ursula enjoyed her triumph; but it was not the triumph of vanity. She was restoring to the world, and to himself, a virtuous man, a useful citizen, who but for her had been lost. Such was the conquest with which she was pleased; but her silence was her only consent. Her eyes, timidly cast on the ground, dared not raise themselves to those of Alcestes: one of her hands only was suffered to drop into his, and the crimson of her beautiful cheeks expressed the transport and emotion of her heart. Hey!" said the father, "you are motionless and dumb! What will you say to him?"— "Whatever you please."—"What I please is to see him happy, provided he make my daughter so."—"It is in his power: he is virtuous, he reveres you, and you love him."—"Let us embrace then, my children. This has been a happy evening, and I forebode well of a marriage, which is concluded as in the good old times. Take my advice, my friend," continued he; "be a man, and live with mankind. It is the intention of nature. She has given faults to us all, that nobody may be dispensed from being indulgent to the faults of others."

Note to "THE MISANTHROPE CORRECTED."—P. 390.

Marmontel, as has been noted elsewhere, was not more superior than his fellows to the temptations of anachronism. The Vosges only became an integral part of France in his own time, at the death of King Stanislaus, in 1766; whereas the Alceste of Molière of course retired into the country a good hundred years earlier. As to the arrangements at p. 399, it must be remembered that the "intendant" of a province, though a less exalted and brilliant person than the governor, was the tolerably absolute head of the administration proper, and directly represented the king. Thus a good intendant, as in the leading case of Turgot in the Limousin, had it in his power to abate almost all the evils of the *ancien régime*—evils which, as a matter of fact, came much more from the excess of personal influence of this kind, and the defect of local representation, than from systematic misgovernment. The abuse, for instance, here referred to—that of deliberately getting the taxes into arrear, so as to have the profits of distraining for them—could, as here, have been checked at once by the slightest trouble on the part of the *seigneur*, and the most moderate exertion of power by the intendant. Indeed, Marmontel is very likely glancing at Turgot, who began his career at Limoges, in Marmontel's own province, in 1761, and was the first practical exponent of Marmontel's ideas.

Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & CO.
Edinburgh and London

